

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 6 July 1999

The **SPEAKER (Hon. J.K.G. Oswald)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

BELAIR NATIONAL PARK

A petition signed by 65 residents of South Australia requesting that the House oppose the proposal to allow commercial development in the Belair National Park was presented by the Hon. D.C. Kotz.

Petition received.

NOARLUNGA HOSPITAL

A petition signed by 1 350 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to fund intensive care facilities at Noarlunga Hospital was presented by the Hon. R.L. Brokenshire.

Petition received.

PARKLANDS

A petition signed by 986 residents of South Australia requesting that the House reject the amendments to the Local Government Bill which relate to the City of Adelaide parklands was presented by Mr Lewis.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that written answers to questions on the Notice Paper, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 28, 29, 88, 122, 158, 161, 162, 179, 180, 182, 185, 203, 205, 207 and 210; and I direct that the following answer to a question without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

UNITED WATER

In reply to **Hon. M.D. RANN** (11 February).

The **Hon. J.W. OLSEN**: I refer the honourable member to the Minister for Government Enterprises' ministerial statement of 16 February 1999.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

The **SPEAKER** laid on the table the report of the committee on the Pelican Point Power Station transmission connection corridor, which has been received and published pursuant to section 17(7) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991.

HANSARD, ELECTRONIC

The **SPEAKER**: As honourable members know, the Weekly *Hansard* report is now available on the Internet on the Tuesday following a sitting week. It has now been decided that, as from the start of the spring session, a corrected Daily *Hansard* will be put on the Internet at about 4 p.m. on the day following a sitting, thus considerably improving this service to members and the public by making *Hansard* available some days sooner than is presently the case. To enable the necessary work to be done in time for this to happen, it will be necessary for honourable members to

return any corrections to the Leader, *Hansard*, by 1 p.m. on the day following a sitting, rather than by 4 p.m. as applies at the moment.

For the remainder of this session, I ask members to observe the 1 p.m. deadline so that the new system can be operating smoothly by 28 September. It is also intended, from the beginning of the next session, to extend throughout Parliament House on the Intranet the present on-line service now available in the *Hansard* office and the Parliamentary Library that provides electronically both uncorrected Daily and Weekly *Hansard*. In this form, the uncorrected Daily *Hansard* will be available within a couple of hours of Parliament's adjourning in the evening. For reasons of confidentiality, this service should remain in-house.

I take this opportunity to remind honourable members that any corrections to *Hansard* should relate only to inaccuracies: they must not alter the meaning of anything said or introduce new matter.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. J.W. Olsen)—

Fees Regulation Act—Regulations—Fees

By the Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development (Hon. R.G. Kerin)—

Regulations under the following Acts—

Apiaries Act—Fees

Fisheries Act—

Abalone Fishery

Blue Crab Fishery

General

Lakes and Coorong Fishery

Marine Scale Fishery

Miscellaneous Fishery

Prawn Fisheries

Revocation

River Murray Fishery

Rock Lobster Fishery

Opal Mining—Marla Regulations

By the Minister for Human Services (Hon. D.C. Brown)—

Regulations under the following Acts—

Chiropodists—Fees

Controlled Substances—Expiation of Offence

Development—Retail Development

Harbors and Navigation—Petroleum Transfer

Nurses—Electoral

Passenger Transport—Vehicle Accreditation

Reproductive Technology—Ethical Practice

South Australian Health Commission—

Medicare Patients Fees

Recognised Hospital Fees

Third Party Premiums Committee Determinations

By the Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon. M.H. Armitage)—

Regulations under the following Acts—

Explosives—Revocation

Sewerage—Fees

Waterworks—Fees

WorkCover Corporation—Statutory Reserves

South Australian Totalizator Agency Board, Direction to—Ministerial Directions

By the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training (Hon. M.R. Buckley)—

ETSA Corporation, Directions to—Ministerial Directions

Motor Accident Commission—Charter

By the Minister for Environment and Heritage (Hon. D.C. Kotz)—

Aboriginal Lands Trust—Report, 1997-98

By the Minister for Industry and Trade (Hon. I.F. Evans)—

Fire Equipment Services South Australia—Report, 1998
 Regulations under the following Acts—
 Acts Specified in Schedules—Variation and Revocation
 Criminal Law (Sentencing)—Drivers Licence Disqualification
 District Court Act—Fees
 Environment, Resources and Development Court—General Jurisdiction Fees
 Other fees
 Evidence—
 Prescribed Courts
 Reproduction of Documents
 Liquor Licensing—
 Age Identification
 Dry Areas Hallett Cove
 Long Term Dry Areas
 Magistrates Court—Civil Fees
 Police—Police Regulations
 Sheriff's Fees
 Travel Agents—National Deed of Trust
 Youth Court—Fees
 Rules of Court—Supreme Court—Supreme Court Act—Enforcement of Orders
 State Electoral Office—General Elections 11 October 1997, Report.

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Minister for Environment and Heritage): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.
 Leave granted.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: At about 6 a.m. on Monday 28 June, a spill of light crude oil occurred off the Mobil refinery, Port Stanvac. The Mobil Pilot immediately put into effect the Port Stanvac Contingency Plan and notified the State Oil Spill Commander, Captain Walter Stuart, at 6.02 a.m. that there was 'a tier two spill with a possible upper limit of 250 tonnes (250 000 litres) or 30 tonnes (30 000 litres) at the lower end.' An emergency response team, directed by Transport SA and involving the Environment Protection Agency and the RSPCA, immediately went into action. Clean-up operations were also assisted by the South Australia Police, the State Emergency Service, PortsCorp, the Australian Marine Safety Authority and Mobil.

The Crown Solicitor's Office has clearly advised the Environment Protection Authority that the Environment Protection Act has no application where a discharge of oil or any oily mixture occurs from an apparatus into State waters. These incidents come under the Pollution of Waters by Oil and Other Noxious Substances Act 1987. Responsibility for this Act is vested in Transport SA.

The oil spill was originally reported as 25 000 litres and was revised upwards in a press release issued by Mobil on 2 July 1999 to 270 000 litres. While this was considerably larger than first indicated, the response was mounted on the oil present and not on a precise volume.

Following consultation with a marine biologist and the Environmental Support Coordinator, and with the knowledge that the Oman crude oil that escaped is very amenable to chemical dispersion within 24 to 48 hours of a spill, the main clean-up strategy involved the use of aerial spraying techniques using aircraft from Australian Maritime Resources. Only those dispersants that have been tested for toxicity and dispersal efficiency and approved by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority were used in these efforts. The first flight took place at 9.21 a.m. on Monday 28 June. This activity

continued during daylight hours until 5 p.m. on Tuesday 29 June.

Initially the oil slick covered an area of about 1 000 metres by 250 metres about three kilometres offshore. Tugs were mobilised to assist in further dispersion by mechanical means and an oil skimmer was used to clean-up the remaining thicker oil. As a precaution, booms were placed across the mouth of the Onkaparinga River to prevent damage to the Onkaparinga estuary. Smaller creeks were also blocked off on that day. Maximum use was made of helicopters to both oversee and direct the spraying operations, to strategically locate resources along the beaches and track any movements of the slick. The on-site planners devised unique snare lines to trap oil in the surf zone that greatly reduced the impact.

The emergency response vessel *Gallantry* was used throughout as the main offshore response vessel. Sixteen clean-up crews of six people each were on stand-by to clean-up any affected beach areas. When the oil reached Silver Sands, the work of these crews on the ground was paramount to reducing the impact of the oil on both the beach and the local wildlife. Oil was scooped up and removed to the Aldinga waste management area.

The RSPCA was also on site, with a wildlife trailer to tend to any wildlife that may have been affected by the spill. However, this trailer was not required at any stage. As a result of all these actions—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hart will come to order.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: —by Thursday 1 July the spill was contained, and by Friday 2 July a thorough clean-up process was completed. The clean-up operation was extremely successful and has indeed minimised the environmental impact of the spill. Currently, Mobil is providing twice daily patrols, and there are daily patrols by the RSPCA. Officers of the EPA, in conjunction with Fisheries and Mobil's environment officers, are putting in place a long-term monitoring program, with particular emphasis on sensitive areas such as the Aldinga reef and beaches in the area. Mobil is required, by law, to pay for the clean-up, and any costs to Government agencies will be reimbursed by Mobil.

Yesterday, the Minister for Transport (Hon. Diana Laidlaw MLC) and I announced the launch of a formal investigation of the causes of the spill and to determine whether there have been breaches of the Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1987 and a general review of procedures. The investigation will be led by an officer from the Government Investigation Office and will consist of authorised officers from Transport SA and the Environment Protection Agency.

The EPA has commissioned an independent impact assessment of the oil spill on the marine environment, from marine biologists from the Flinders and Adelaide Universities, a preliminary result of which we hope to have available later this week. Initial surveys have already been completed, and further assessment work will be undertaken over the next few weeks.

Investigations to date have included discussions with Mobil, inspection of the site and securing of the failed equipment alleged to be the major contributory cause of the spill. Expert engineers have commenced an initial assessment of the failed equipment, and this will be assisted by today's arrival of a team from the manufacturer of the equipment—brought to Australia from the United Kingdom by Mobil.

The investigation will also include interviews with members of the crew of the ship associated with the spill. Action taken under the Pollution of Water by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1987 is dependent on the outcome of investigations, which should be completed within a four week period. Investigation of this spill comes under this Act because it involves discharge of oil or any oily mixture from an apparatus into State waters.

Any action to be taken under the Environment Protection Act will depend upon the outcome of investigations which should be completed within at least three months. The results of both investigations will be referred to the Crown Solicitor's Office for an opinion on whether a case exists for legal action to be taken under either the Pollution of Water by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1987, the Environment Protection Act 1993, or both.

The Environment Protection Authority acts autonomously in its enforcement of the Environment Protection Act, and it is not subject to the direction of the Minister in these matters. This includes assessing the advice from the Crown on potential breaches and to determine what action is to be taken if the investigation reveals that a breach of the Environment Protection Act has occurred.

Environmental disaster was averted by the quick action, professionalism and expertise of the officers entrusted to the clean-up, who were acting in accordance with the national plan to combat pollution of the sea by oil and other noxious and hazardous substances. I take this opportunity to commend all who were involved in the clean-up operation.

The formation of the investigation team by Transport SA and the EPA will facilitate a full and thorough examination of all circumstances surrounding this oil spill and preventive actions that can be taken in the future. I will report on the outcomes of these investigations, noting that the release of the investigations is, however, contingent on whether or not prosecutions are launched.

QUESTION TIME

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Minister for Environment and Heritage explain her statement yesterday that the Transport Act imposes a mandatory fine of \$200 000 for the discharge of oil regardless of whether it is negligent or not and, if that is correct, did this apply to the spill in 1996 and will Mobil be automatically fined for last week's spill? Yesterday the Minister said that Mobil had been fined \$24 000 for the 1996 oil spill at Port Stanvac and went on to say:

There are areas within the Transport Act which does, in effect, enable a mandatory amount of penalty to the discharge of oil regardless of whether it is negligent or not and there is a \$200 000 fine that is attached to it in that particular aspect.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The answer I gave is quite correct. Obviously, it is subject to the charge being heard but section 26(2) does have a mandatory and fixed amount, subject once again, as I said to the honourable member, to the charge being laid.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader can ask his second question if he wishes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Can the Premier—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Spence will come to order.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Spence.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Spence.

Mr SCALZI: Can the Premier inform the House of the Government's latest efforts in striking a responsible balance between economic development and protecting the environment and how the Government is listening to the people of South Australia in achieving that balance?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The incompetence was 11 years of Labor Administration that left us in 1993. We had a situation where our city waterways were polluted and unusable; we had sewage sludge being pumped into Gulf St Vincent regardless of the seagrass losses; we had Mount Lofty Summit burnt out, neglected and dilapidated; and we had our national parks increased in size dramatically but with no thought to long term management, the result being parks riddled with pests and animals, roads left pot-holed and unsurfaced and tourist facilities virtually non-existent. They are just a few of the examples that we inherited from a Labor Administration.

We have started stage 2 of the Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens upgrade. As part of our parks agenda, to reply to the member's question, we have put in money to improve parks through erosion controls, revegetation, and weed and pest plant management. We have improved visitor facilities at Innes National Park, Kangaroo Island parks and the Morialta Conservation Park, and we put management of the environment back into the hands of the community, the people who want to be involved and who have the local knowledge. We have developed a grass roots approach to the management of our environment.

We listen to what the community wants on environmental protection and conservation of our natural assets. Importantly, we have established the Youth Environment Council and we are listening to the leaders of tomorrow, seeking their input, their advice and their aspirations as to the management of the environment. That is unlike Opposition members, who run these so-called Labor Listens campaigns, and then refuse to show up. The Leader has told us time and time again how important the Labor Listens forums are. He places great importance on how accessible and approachable he and his colleagues are and how much they value the opinions of their constituents. That is an admirable quality, and I concur with that. With the Leader on this point, I am at one. All politicians should value the contributions of those who voted them in. Unfortunately, the rhetoric from the Leader has left us a little confused.

Having heard myself of the importance that he places on Labor Listens, I was rather surprised to hear that he did not turn up to the last one. No warning, no apology, no notice, no phone call, just 'no show Mike'. He did not turn up—

Ms Rankine interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: —and Jennifer was not there, either. She did not turn up. I am sure that the member for Wright knows what I am talking about. Her Labor Listens meeting for 15 June turned in to Labor Vanishes. The member for Wright advertised the meeting, told everyone that the Leader would attend (and I think that the Deputy Leader

was supposed to attend as well), and without warning pulled the pin and left 10 people stranded outside in the cold. When she was embarrassed by a caller on 5DN talkback radio complaining about the shambles, the member for Wright telephoned in and she offered a feeble explanation along the lines of, 'Mike was unavailable, he had other commitments, and a range of circumstances threw the arrangements right out the window.'

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: That explains everything, I suppose, as to why it did not take place. Labor Listens is of fundamental importance as long as there is nothing interesting on elsewhere.

Ms Rankine interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The honourable member changed her mind at the last minute but she did not have the decency to tell the people who were going to turn up. However, I acknowledge that the member sent a staff member and we can be grateful for the fact that she was only half an hour late.

Ms KEY: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. How does this answer the question that the Premier was asked? It does not seem to be in concert with the question that he was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member is asking the Chair to interpret the point of order. The member should make a more specific point of order. However, the Premier is starting to stray into the area of debate, and I ask him to come back to the question.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I am happy for the honourable member to explain the point. We have put in place a youth council on the environment to give us advice, because we want to listen to them. I am contrasting what we put in place with the actions of the member for Wright, who just got it all wrong. The member for Wright, apparently, after sending a staff member to this meeting—

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Oh, they don't want to hear.

Mr ATKINSON: Could we have the benefit of your ruling, Sir, on whether the Premier is responsible to the House for a Labor Listens meeting?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled in bringing the Premier back to the substance of the reply and relating it to the question asked.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: It relates to the business of the House because the staff member explained to the caller that the member for Wright had gone to Melbourne because of the controversy with Trevor crossing the floor. I can understand their disappointment at that, but it gets even better.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to come back to the substance of the question.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I am drawing a stark contrast between our Youth Environment Council and the Labor Listens meeting, to which they did not turn up and about which they gave confused and conflicting excuses to the public of South Australia afterwards. Not only did the member for Wright ring back 5DN talk-back radio to explain why she was not there but also she compounded the problem by going to the Messenger press, where the honourable member's explanation was a little different. However, I think that it helps us to understand—

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order. Sir, the Premier is defying your ruling on the relevance of this answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair has had the opportunity of checking the question that was asked, and the Chair still sticks to its original ruling that the Premier is straying from the text of the question. I ask him to return to the reply to the question and start to wind up his reply.

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Mr Speaker, in winding up my reply at your request, I can only say, as one of the people left stranded said, 'All dressed up and nowhere to go. It's just bad manners.'

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

Mr HILL (Kaurna): My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will come to order, as will the member for Wright.

Mr HILL: When was the Minister first advised of the true extent of the oil spill on 28 June 1999; how did the EPA and Transport SA know that they needed sufficient equipment and staff to clean up a spill much larger than the 25 000 litres that had been advised; and why was the figure of 25 000 litres put into the public arena, given the Minister's admission today that on Monday 28 June the State oil spill commander was told that there was 'a tier two spill with a possible upper limit of 250 000 litres or 30 000 litres at the lower end'?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Can I first determine through you, Sir, whether the member for Kaurna was given a copy of my ministerial statement as I was applying it, because the answers to the very questions that the honourable member is asking—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left will remain silent so that the Chair can hear the reply.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The answers to those questions are in the ministerial statement.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume her seat. If members on my left continue to interject after they have been called to order, there will be some naming going on here this afternoon, at a time when I am sure that members will want to be present to hear the replies.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I refer the honourable member to my ministerial statement. Any of the other questions that were asked related to information given from Mobil. So, I am afraid that the honourable member will have to ask Mobil why those particular quantities were put out at that time. However, the ministerial statement deals with all the other issues that the honourable member raised from the *Advertiser* article.

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): My question is—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Can the Deputy Premier outline the State Government's response to the increased funding now available to the Natural Heritage Trust following the partial sale of Telstra?

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: As the Premier said, there has never been such a significant attempt to address environmental issues as we have seen in the past five or six years since this Government has been in power. The Natural Heritage

Trust (NHT) has been a significant initiative right across Australia and, certainly in this State, it has seen the environmental effort pick up enormously. The Landcare ethic has been strong for some time but it was always enormously under-resourced, and that ethic has really grown on the basis of the encouragement that it has received as a result of the funding from the State and Federal Governments. That movement is not something borne out of an environmental philosophy; it really is borne out of a hands-on attitude whereby the environment and economic sustainability go hand in hand.

We have seen many significant projects as a result of this partnership of the Commonwealth, the State and the community. This State has seen the NHT as an opportunity finally to fund and implement many of the environmental projects about which we have previously spoken, and this State has made it a priority and committed additional money to ensure that we attract as much NHT funding as possible from the Commonwealth.

As the Premier said, many groups are involved, including soil boards, catchment groups, over 300 Landcare groups, schools, community groups and volunteers right across South Australia who have been encouraged by what they have seen come forward.

Here are just a few examples of the significant projects where the environment and the economy have gone hand in hand. Members will be well aware of the Upper South-East drainage program, for which there are very significant environmental and economic benefits. Hundreds of thousands of hectares in that area were ruined by salinity. The drainage program has rehabilitated much of the land through that area. As well, we have seen revegetation, with farmers picking up on salt land agronomy and increasing their productivity.

On the environmental side, a very important project has been the rehabilitation of significant world-class wetlands in that area which before the drainage program would have seemed almost impossible for us to have achieved. Also, there are major projects right up and down the Murray River addressing the salinity and environmental issues. The continued rehabilitation that the State has undertaken in irrigation areas has been very significant with respect to the salt load going back into the river. We look forward to the Federal Government hopefully announcing soon its commitment to the Loxton irrigation scheme to match the previous commitment put in by the State Government.

Also, two weeks ago, the next stage of the national dry land salinity program was launched both here and in Canberra. That is an enormous challenge for all of Australia to take up. We do face losing an enormous number of hectares right across Australia. Western Australia's problem is bigger than ours, but it is very significant in South Australia, whether you look at the South-East, Kangaroo Island, the Mid North, Yorke Peninsula or Eyre Peninsula—right across the State there are salinity problems which need to be addressed.

Because of the funding and the dedicated effort of our State and regional assessment panels, backed up by the people power of all the volunteers on the ground, these projects are really starting to take shape across South Australia. We are seeing on ground works, and it was in this respect that there was always criticism in the past of our environmental efforts. So, we look forward to the community and the State working together with the Commonwealth in ensuring that we make the absolute most of this current surge in environmental rehabilitation.

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

Mr HILL (Kaurana): Has the Minister for Environment and Heritage now read the report of the joint EPA-Transport SA investigation into the discharge of 10 000 litres of oil into the marine environment at Port Stanvac in 1996? Can the Minister say why Crown Law found two years later that the EPA recommendation to prosecute should not proceed? Will the Minister now immediately release this report and associated legal opinions in response to my application for these documents under freedom of information? On 2 October 1996 the EPA announced that the findings of the joint EPA-Transport SA inquiry into the 1996 oil spill would be released within a week. On 1 July 1999, almost three years later, the Minister said there was no report on the 1996 oil spill and that she had not read any details of the investigation.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: First, I want to put on the record of this House some of the confusion that members seem to have in their mind about the responsibilities of the Environment Minister. A Labor Government initiated the Environment Protection Act, which was supported in a bipartisan way. However, it was a Labor Government that initiated the Act under which we work now, so it is a monumental farce to ask some of the questions that are being asked at the present time when the initiation of that Act of Parliament, supported by this Parliament, removed the Minister for the Environment from certain areas of responsibilities and roles.

The Labor Government initially set up an Environment Protection Authority which was independent of the Minister for the Environment. If Opposition members feel that there should be some changes to the methods under which the roles and responsibilities of the Minister for the Environment should take place at this time, then I suggest they know the means by which to change legislation. However, in regard to the answer to the member's question, considering that the member has just announced that he has put in an FOI request on all the information he has just sought, I suggest that he enables the FOI procedures to now take place.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Colton.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COUNCIL

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): Will the Minister for Environment and Heritage advise the House of the outcomes for South Australia following the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council meeting in Hobart last Friday?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I thank the honourable member for his question and, as he said, I represented South Australia at a meeting of the National Environment Protection Council in Hobart last Friday. All States were represented at this very important meeting with major decisions on recycling being made. I am pleased to advise the House that at this meeting Australia's Environment Ministers signed an important agreement that will work to reduce litter resulting from packaging and to develop recycling practices and products to deal with used packaging. I am sure that all members within this House are well aware of both the visual impact of litter on our aesthetic environment and the serious landfill—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for continuing to disrupt the House.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:—impact of packaging in our waste stream. South Australia, as we all know, leads the field in waste reduction and is, in fact, the only State that already has some very strong laws that deal with litter and recycling through the container deposit legislation. As a result of CDL, South Australians recover and reuse 83 per cent of our glass beverage containers compared to a national average of 45 per cent. We do recover 73 per cent of plastic containers, compared to a 30 per cent national average, and 84 per cent of our aluminium containers, and that compares to a 65 per cent national average.

Under the new National Packaging Covenant, governments will contribute \$17.45 million over three years to assist with a range of new initiatives to deal with packaging and associated recycling. This figure will be matched by an industry contribution to create a total funding pool of \$35 million. The South Australian Government will contribute \$2.3 million towards this measure.

The covenant is a voluntary agreement with industry that outlines responsibilities and undertakings for the life cycle management of packaging, including its recovery, reuse and recycling. Through the covenant, action plans are to be put in place that will set measurable life cycle objectives and waste reduction goals for all major packaging materials. The covenant will also see all signatories implementing purchasing policies for recycled goods and services, which will provide greater opportunities for the use of these products. This measure will add an industry focus on packaging reduction which has not previously existed.

The concerns of small business have also been addressed in this measure and it will not be imposed on those businesses that do not significantly contribute to the waste stream. South Australia's position was strongly supported by the Western Australian Minister, and we have successfully convinced the Ministerial Council of the need to include a three year transitional period towards implementation of the mandatory requirements implicit in the making of a national environment protection measure. The measure is a result of negotiation and consultation between representatives of all spheres of Government, industry and the general community, and it is a boon for South Australia, which already leads the way on waste management through its container deposit legislation. I certainly look forward to its implementation.

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

Mr HILL (Kaurna): My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Given the Minister's statement on radio that news of the oil spill gave her a feeling of impending disaster, why did the Minister not visit the site, and can the Minister explain how much oil must be spilt and how many beaches must be polluted before the Minister will inspect damage to our environment? On 5 July on radio the Minister said:

To learn that it's 10 times more than initially expected certainly adds to that feeling of impending disaster.

The Minister also said:

I can certainly tell you that I haven't been down to look at the oil spill and there's no—no real reason that I actually should.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I should hope that almost every member in this place would have felt some degree of angst when we heard about a spill emanating from an oil refinery

into our marine environment. The important aspect of this situation, I suggest, is that it is highly irrelevant whether I undertook some form of inspection which the member for Kaurna seems to think may have been necessary. What was necessary was that the emergency response teams were out doing the job they were set up to do under a national emergency response plan. This forum—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:—here should understand that we should not be taking away from the emergency response teams' efforts which, in an amazingly short period of time, cleaned up what was a disaster in terms of potential risk to the environment and minimised environmental harm. Again, I offer my thanks and commendation to those who were out doing the job they were meant to do. The clean-up was done in a very quick period of time.

EFFLUENT REUSE SCHEME

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): Will the Minister for Government Enterprises advise the House of the environmental benefits that are now being achieved as part of SA Water's environmental improvements program and, in particular, the effluent reuse scheme?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I thank the member for Heysen for a question about something which the Government regards as very important and, indeed, into which it is investing a lot of time, energy and taxpayers' funds to ensure that the environment is protected. We, through SA Water, are very conscious of the environmental impacts and, as a result, a number of initiatives are being implemented to improve SA Water's water and waste water operations and its general protection of the marine environment, rivers, resources, and so on.

Obviously, the most significant of all of those inputs is the \$210 million environmental improvement program (EIP) for the four metropolitan waste water treatment plants which is attempting to decrease very significantly the discharge of nutrients into the metropolitan marine environment and to maximise the productive reuse of treated waste water. The EIP is one of the largest environmental initiatives in Australia and already major progress has been made, the most obvious example of which is the dissolved air flotation filtration plant at Bolivar, which cost \$30 million and which is in the final stages of commissioning trials.

Later this year the plant will take up to 50 per cent of the treated waste water flows from the Bolivar plant and filter it for irrigation via the Virginia pipeline scheme—up to 50 per cent of the treated waste water will be utilised. The scheme, obviously, provides an alternative source of water from the local underground supplies, which are already under stress and are therefore progressively deteriorating in quality; and it will support one of Australia's and South Australia's most important export industries.

The EIP also includes the construction at Bolivar of a new activated sludge treatment process which, in conjunction with the dissolved air flotation filtration plant, will enable the reuse of up to 70 per cent of Bolivar's waste water flows. And, very importantly, it will reduce quite dramatically the discharge of nutrients to the sea by up to 95 per cent—95 per cent. This means that, once this program is instituted, of the 3 500 tonnes of nitrogen that enters Bolivar each year—and has continued to do so under the previous Administration—

only about 180 tonnes will be discharged to the sea. That is, 95 per cent will not be discharged to the environment.

Such a program will obviously have a huge effect on the coastal marine environment, and it is typical, frankly, of the environmental responsibility being shown by the Government. That is likely to see the regeneration of the seagrasses and, where the seagrasses regenerate, the fish grow again. People such as the member of my staff who launched his boat recently from the West Beach boat launching facility (which he enjoys a lot) and who went out and caught his boat limit of whiting will be able to do that more often, not only because of the boat launching facility but also because there will be more whiting there, thanks to the seagrasses.

We are also committed to maximising the productive use of recycled waste water through land based irrigation for recreational development, agricultural uses and horticultural activities, and the Virginia pipeline scheme, which will take the EIP overflow, if you like, from Bolivar will initially achieve irrigation of more than 20 000 megalitres annually. That better utilisation will be an enormous boost to agriculture and to the State's economy.

A second major scheme, to reuse treated waste water from the Christies Beach waste water treatment plant, will initially irrigate 600 hectares of new vines in the Willunga region, and recycled water from the newly commissioned Aldinga waste water treatment plant is being used for irrigation of 60 hectares of vines adjacent to the plant. These are clearly success stories.

What this means is that overall, by the year 2000, South Australia will reuse in a productive fashion about 30 per cent of its waste water generated from SA Water's metropolitan waste water treatment plants and around 20 per cent from its country waste water plants. It is therefore clear that the Government not only listens to the concerns of the people of South Australia about wanting to protect the environment but it also actually acts to make sure that the outcomes are positive.

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

Mr HILL (Kaurna): My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Following the oil spill at Port Stanvac on 28 June 1999, did Mobil Oil offer the Minister a briefing on the incident and can the Minister confirm that she declined this offer? Has the Minister now had a face to face meeting with Mobil eight days after the spill?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It would appear that again the honourable member has not understood that the responsibility for this lies in different jurisdictions. All the due processes of law are being undertaken at the moment to comply with the necessary outcomes of investigation into this spill. The specific answers to the questions that the honourable member is asking, related to my previous answer, are 'No' and 'No.'

ENVIRONMENT, EDUCATION

Mr MEIER (Goyder): My question is directed to the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Giles will come to order.

Mr MEIER: Will the Minister advise this House how the Government is supporting environmental education in South Australia?

Members interjecting:

Mr MEIER: Just a minute; wait for it. Last week the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training visited some 15 schools in my electorate, one of which was Port Vincent Primary School, which was recently named Australia's top environmental school in the Keep Australia Beautiful National Association School Environment Awards. This is the second time that school has won the award. In fact, it is a back to back win for it, and the Port Vincent Primary School's being so successful in Australia is something of which every member of this House should be very proud.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I am committed to ensuring that our students have adequate and relevant learning programs that benefit them and the whole community in the area of the environment. It is a matter of great pride that South Australia is the national leader in this area, thanks to our school curriculum and also to an involvement in environmental matters throughout schooling. That is great to see.

As the member for Goyder said, last week I visited some 15 schools on the Yorke Peninsula, and Port Vincent Primary School was one of those. That is a school of only 28 students, yet it has a magnificent environmental program. I commend the Principal and the teacher at that school for their enthusiasm and encouragement of their students.

As the member for Goyder also said, this year again the school has won the national Keep Australia Beautiful award for 1999. It won it in 1997 and has won it again in 1999. When you talk to these young people, who are not secondary school students but primary school students, they can roll off the botanical names of species of fish, crustaceans, sea plants and a range of things as could someone who has a tertiary degree. They are just outstanding. They dive off the reef, at which point they count the number of species over a 50 metre area and record that on a scientific basis. They undertake daily temperature measurements and a range of other environmental measures at this school. Within their school these students are growing sand dune plants that exist naturally on sand dunes; they have brought some beach sand in and developed a number of species there.

So, it really is an outstanding program, and I commend the teachers and students of that school. This is not just a one-off program, as a number of others are happening in our schools, involving Coast Watch, Water Watch, Landcare, energy and water audits, waste minimisation, Catchment Care and urban forest; and the list goes on. Nearly every school that I visit has some sort of environmental program being offered and undertaken at the school.

Another good example of this is the Ardtornish Primary School, where the Kids Congress for Catchment Care program involves students from over 50 schools actively caring for their local catchment areas. But it has gone further than that: this Kids Congress has been so successful that they are now organising an international Kids Congress for the year 2000. It is an excellent program, and one of many operating within our schools.

The Minister for Environment and Heritage and I have established the Youth Environment Council of South Australia. We meet with them at least four times a year to discuss various environmental issues that they see, and they are a very enthusiastic group of young people. The environment curriculum for students in our schools is second to none.

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Following comments made today by the head of the Environment Protection Authority (Mr Stephen Walsh) concerning problems about the relationship between the EPA and Transport SA, will the Government establish an independent inquiry, open to the public and chaired by either a District Court judge or a QC at arm's length from the Government, first to investigate all aspects of the latest spill at Port Stanvac and the roles undertaken by the EPA and Transport SA, including monitoring processes; and, secondly, to review the regulations of the petrochemical industry in South Australia to develop better protocols and procedures to protect our marine environment? Today, the EPA Chairman, Stephen Walsh, said:

It is a little frustrating to us that there is a difference in terms of jurisdiction between the Department of Transport on the one hand and the authority on the other hand, because the public see us as the environmental watchdog in this State.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I have not heard the comments made by Stephen Walsh this morning. However, I can advise the House that, in terms of cooperation between Transport SA, the EPA and all the emergency services pooled together on this operation, there is absolutely no confusion. Each of the agencies knows full well the responsibilities it holds and, right from the very first moment the spill was notified, all those due processes fell into place. I can only suggest that, if the Leader of the Opposition is confused, it is his own problem. In terms of anything Stephen Walsh may have said about jurisdiction, he is the Chairman of the Environment Protection Authority. If Mr Walsh feels that he needs to look at some of these issues under the auspices of the Environment Protection Authority, then he is certainly entitled to do so.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAND

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: Will the Minister for Local Government tell the House how the Government is acting to enable local government to preserve council land for local residents?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: As members would be aware, the local government Bills replace the Local Government Act 1934 with an administration and management for council land. These measures form an innovative, streamlined approach and act upon the importance of public land to the whole community. The current system of land under the Local Government Act is classified in a way that is full of ambiguities and anomalies. The present Act makes the distinction between terminologies and defines in one part 'parklands' and in another part 'reserves' but leaves unclear the meaning of those categories. The Act is not clear on how councils go about declaring or dedicating land as parkland, about the capacity for a park or other land use for community purposes to be developed or disposed of, or how it—

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Minister is canvassing the merits of the Local Government Bill currently before Parliament. I would have thought that it was a breach of Standing Orders to use Question Time to canvass the merits or demerits of a Bill before the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not uphold the point of order, except to say that, if the Minister does stray into matters before the House, the Chair will have to act. I ask the Minister to choose his words carefully.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Yes, Sir; I will try to speak in the broad policy direction. I am certainly talking about the current Local Government Act as it exists. As I said, it is not clear how council land can be disposed of and the usual method of acquisition, ownership or control of the area of land depends on the classification of the land; for example, freehold land, which a council has developed as a park, may not necessarily be subject to any legal restrictions on its use or its subsequent alienation. As a general principle, the Government is seeking to classify certain land that is owned under the council's care, control or management as community land which is to be retained and managed for the benefit of the community. This will give local residents a greater say on how their environment is managed.

The SPEAKER: Order! I refer to my previous remarks and ask the Minister to be careful about not straying as he replies to this question.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Yes, I will. What's this—the attack of the killer tadpole?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will come back to the reply.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: Thank you, Sir. Through a number of policy initiatives, the Government is seeking to have a clear classification for land; it is not just through any Act coming before this Parliament. The Government is seeking—quite rightly—to have some certainty over lands (and, before the member for Spence gets up, let me say that I am replying to the generality, not to any specific measure before this House) by classifying land—

An honourable member: By what means?

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: By a number of means—in a way that guarantees certainty for the people of South Australia. The Minister for Planning is looking at this matter under general planning provisions to create some degree of certainty over this land so that the people of South Australia—and, more importantly, our children—can be assured that, through a variety of mechanisms, land has some certainty of tenure and some certainty of preservation. When the Labor Party was in office it referred to it as second generation parklands, and it never did one thing about it. Through a number of mechanisms—some of them before this House; others yet to be introduced before this House—this Government is seeking to create certainty with our environmental heritage, to create a new regime whereby the public can be assured that that which we value, that which we want to be preserved, can be preserved for future generations. Members opposite can laugh and catcall as much as they like; it does not alter one immutable fact: this Government is getting on with the job—and it is a very important job. Whether it is in this area or any other area, this Government is about action, not about saying nice things—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: You are the best example—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will not respond to interjections as they are out of order.

The Hon. M.K. BRINDAL: I won't, Sir.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith will contain himself.

PORT STANVAC OIL SPILL

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Minister

for the Environment failed to read the report into the 1996 oil spill at Port Stanvac and then denied that such a report existed, that she made conflicting claims about Mobil being fined over the 1996 spill, made a misleading statement about penalties under the Transport Act, failed to visit the site of the 1999 oil spill, failed to establish the extent of the 1999 spill, did not reveal until today information given more than a week ago to the State Oil Spill Commander about the possible extent of the oil, has ruled out an independent public inquiry and told the Estimates Committee that oil spills are not her responsibility, does the Premier have full confidence in the Minister for Environment in the execution of her portfolio?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: The tactics of the Opposition are as predictable as they can be. We see an Opposition come in here to the Parliament—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: Yes—with an issue that is now under control. There has been clearly demonstrated minimum impact in relation to the environment. Appropriate steps are being put in place to ensure that the cause of such a spill is not repeated again in the future. The company concerned—and even the member for Kaurana has, I understand, been prepared to acknowledge this—has been prepared to act after the event as a good corporate citizen in terms of its communication with locals and deploying resources to ensure that any effect from this accident is minimised, and appropriately so. An investigation will now be undertaken to ensure that the lessons of this incident can be taken on board to ensure that we do not have a repeat of this incident in the future.

That is the responsible, appropriate course of action to take. I know this Opposition is hellbent on finding any issue it can to try to create a political storm. The fact is that this incident was unfortunate. The fact is that action was taken. The fact is that there has been minimum impact upon the environment, and thankfully so. The fact is that the company has taken a good corporate response following the accident, and we are putting in place measures to ensure we identify the cause so that it cannot be happen again.

The simple question is, what more can be done in those circumstances? As I understand it, talk-back radio on 5AA highlighted the fact that Governments in the past have been discharging sewage into Gulf St Vincent that has had a far more debilitating effect on the environment, and it was this Government that did something about it. It was not Bolivar, Christies and Aldinga; it was not the Opposition and the Labor Party in Government that took any credentials on environmental management and clean-up—none at all—because our waterways, rivers and gulfs were constantly degraded by the Labor Party's lack of action, lack of policy and lack of initiative in relation to environmental clean-up.

Let the record speak for itself. Let the action of commitment of funds speak for itself. Let the talk-back callers, as we noticed on Saturday morning, highlight the fact that these circumstances have been there for some 10 or 15 years and it is this Government that has actually done something about it. So, I stand with this Government and all the Ministers and members of this Liberal Party absolutely convinced and proud of the environmental record: this is not rhetoric but actions that have been put in place to improve the environment of South Australia. A record of 11 years of which the Labor Government could not come within a bull's roar.

ECOTOURISM

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Can the Minister for Tourism outline to the House how South Australia is positioning itself as a leading destination for ecotourism experiences?

The Hon. J. HALL: I thank the member for Flinders for her question because she, like I, has a passionate commitment to the activities of the tourism industry sector in this State. I am sure all members would be well aware that there is such enormous potential for South Australia to take advantage of the growing and affluent market involved in ecotourism, particularly, I am sure members of the House would be delighted to know, as these opportunities are increased, because parks, reserves, conservation parks and the wilderness protection areas of South Australia cover more than 21 per cent of the State. That gives us an enormous advantage in promotion and marketing activities which, I am sure most members of the House would acknowledge, the South Australian Tourism Commission is very professional at doing.

It allows us to focus on one of the key branding activities, that is, of unspoiled nature. In the first *Secrets* book, which I referred to on a number of occasions, there was extensive marketing of many of our natural attractions such as the Coorong and the Naracoorte Caves, being specific examples. The House might be interested to know that, since the release of the black book, the Naracoorte Caves, in particular, have reported a 52 per cent increase in visitation as a direct result of that program. That is something we should be very pleased with. I know many members would be very conscious of some of the absolutely wonderful visuals that have been involved in the marketing campaigns of that first *Secrets* activity. One in particular, which I know would interest the member for Stuart, is of the cyclists in the Flinders Ranges because it is in many of the publications—

The Hon. M.K. Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J. HALL: No, it was not him, actually, but we asked him. Perhaps next time. This morning I was proud to release phase 2 of *More South Australian Secrets*. In that booklet, which I intend to circulate to all members in the next couple of days, are some magnificent references to activities that involve ecotourism, particularly, the Heysen Trail and it is stated that the Government's investment in all these activities show that we are hugely benefiting as a State. I think it also deserves to be put on record that the activities at Wilpena have opened up this enormous place and facilities for international as well as interstate visitors, and they are to be commended for it.

We also know of what is happening on Kangaroo Island. That deserves to be detailed because this Government has committed an enormous investment into sealing the roads on the island, particularly through Flinders Chase. It is increasing tourism access and is also stopping the surrounding vegetation from being choked with road dust. I know members would be impressed with that piece of information. Also, I am told that, having provided these wonderful roads, it encourages visitors not to make their own roads, which is an important aspect for people particularly interested in ecotourism. Still on Kangaroo Island, the House will be delighted to know of the new project about to start over there called the 'Rocky River Platypus Waterholes Project'. This is going to be special because it is in conjunction with other work taking place on the island and, unquestionably, it is going to establish Kangaroo Island as one of Australia's key

tourist destinations for those who are interested in ecotourism and adventure travel.

I would also pay tribute to the private sector and what it is doing in ecotourism because it is very important to acknowledge its involvement. For example, BRL Hardy's project at Banrock Station of a wetland and bird sanctuary will not only provide the Riverland with a fabulous new wine complex but will restore some of the best wetlands along the River Murray, and it will make a superb tourist destination not only for South Australians but for those who want to travel to our State from other States and countries.

I have just outlined a few of the natural attractions of South Australia, but I could go on to refer to many more. I encourage members to read this magnificent burgundy book that will be distributed in the next couple of days. What is happening in the tourism industry at the moment is very exciting. What is being demonstrated by the publication of this book and supported at the launch this morning shows clearly that not only are our opportunities in the area of ecotourism but they go right across the wine regions and areas of the Outback as well.

Finally, I would like to leave the House with a figure that demonstrates our State's success in the area of ecotourism, in particular. The Australian Bureau of Tourism Research figures show that, in 1996, 68 per cent of all international tourists to the Adelaide region visited a national park or State reserve. That 68 per cent compares with the national figure for Australia of 42 per cent. Those figures demonstrate absolutely what a great future we have in this burgeoning business of ecotourism. I am tempted, Mr Speaker, to outline some more of the attributes in this region; however, I know you will avidly read this publication and probably ask me a question about it next week.

CRIME PENALTIES

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): When will the Premier introduce amendments to the Controlled Substances Act and the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act to introduce mandatory life sentences for drug trafficking and abolish parole? In his regular spot on Jeremy Cordeaux's 5DN program on Friday 25 June the Premier said that people who sell drugs should always be sentenced to a maximum penalty of life and that a life sentence should mean the term of the offender's natural life. The Premier said:

These traffickers are supposed to get life. Life meaning life, not discounted for good behaviour or a range of other things.

When is the legislation coming?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: In part, that was not totally accurate.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: No, it was not totally accurate. There were two words in the quote that are not accurate. However, in essence, that is exactly what I said and what my view is. As members know, this Government has taken a number of initiatives in relation to drugs in collaboration and cooperation with the Commonwealth Government. As I have also indicated and as has been clearly demonstrated in a number of areas, it has to be done not on a single front but on a number of fronts in—

Mr Atkinson: So you are not going to do it?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: No—in relation to a number of areas. We will work through each of those policy initiatives to put them in place in time.

NORTHERN ADELAIDE WETLANDS

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Can the Minister for Government Enterprises advise why the South Australian Government has established wetlands in the northern metropolitan area?

The Hon. M.J.H. ARMITAGE: I thank the member for his perceptive question. Over the last five years the Government has helped to establish a 337 hectare constructed wetlands system in Adelaide's northern suburbs. These wetlands extend from Mawson Lakes to the Port River, and they encompass five separate wetlands. The Magazine Creek, the Range, the Barker Inlet and the Connector wetlands were designed and built by the Land Management Corporation and they link to the City of Salisbury's greenfields wetlands. In total, they form the largest constructed urban stormwater wetlands in the world. So, we are talking about world's best practice.

The wetlands have a number of purposes. The primary one is to remove pollutants from urban stormwater before that stormwater discharges into the Barker Inlet, which is an important commercial and recreational fishing resource for this State. I will not detail how important fishing is to the community of South Australia. Stormwater contains harmful chemicals such as pesticides, fertilisers, heavy metals, detergents and sediments, as well as litter that is washed from our rooftops and streets into the stormwater system. Obviously, such substances can cause damage to the marine environment.

King George whiting, bream, mullet, garfish and blue crabs all use the safe waters of Barker Inlet to raise and nurture their young, so it is vitally important that the Barker Inlet remains healthy so that fish and crustaceans remain and breed, importantly, in the area. By removing the stormwater contaminants, the wetlands that have been created by the Land Management Corporation protect the Barker Inlet from pollutants that would otherwise find their way into our waterways.

The wetlands also provide a habitat for over 130 migratory shore birds which are attracted not only to the waterways but also to the hundreds of different plant species, many of which have been selected for their use as a food source for birdlife; in other words, to encourage the birds to this area. Some of the migratory wading birds that utilise the wetlands are listed under one or both of two international agreements—the Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement and the China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement. These agreements require the parties to ensure that the species listed in them are not endangered by actions in those countries, and the wetlands provide a supportive environment in addition to not harming them. Schoolchildren learn from the wetlands, with the City of Port Adelaide Enfield now providing tours for school groups wanting to find out more about how wetlands work.

In conclusion, the wetlands system developed by the Land Management Corporation in Adelaide's north is providing a number of important benefits to the State. They help to clear up the waste water entering the Barker Inlet, they protect South Australia's valuable fish stocks, they attract wildlife back to the region and they provide an ongoing, outdoor classroom for schoolchildren to gain hands-on knowledge of the importance of wetlands and the importance of protecting our environment.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The SPEAKER: The question before the Chair is that the House note grievances.

Ms KEY (Hanson): My grievance concerns shelter workers, particularly youth shelter workers, in the electorate of Hanson. It is of great concern to me and my colleagues to find that, although a lot of homelessness has been reported previously in this House, discrimination seems to attach to that homelessness. The example that I will give was written by one of my constituents who works in a shelter, and she has changed the names to make sure that the people are not identifiable.

My constituent related a case of a young couple from interstate, both 16 and wanting to relocate to start a new life. They have been criticised and hassled due to their ages and having children so young—they have one female child 14 months old and one on the way. The young man, whom in this case we shall call Devon, is the father of both the 14 month old and the child on the way, with his partner Sharley. They arrived in Adelaide homeless with no money, no family, no supports and no-one on whom they could call in case of crisis.

Crisis Care was engaged to try to find them somewhere suitable to live until they could find a home of their own for themselves and their young child. There were no vacancies anywhere and quite a few prospective landlords were unhappy to see such young people wanting to rent a house. The only vacancies that were available under accommodation assistance were for 12 to 25 year olds, but the concern that was raised about that accommodation was that the two of them could not go into the shelter together and the female child had to go with her mother.

My understanding, and that of the worker who raised this issue with me, is that the family has been split up in this way because a young father with a child, particularly a female child, cannot be housed in a shelter, although a young woman with a female or male child can be housed in a shelter where room is available.

The worker went on to say that the crisis response team advised that it was unable to secure the kind of accommodation the couple required due to their unusual needs and told them to seek suitable accommodation elsewhere. The worker said that 'elsewhere' would be the YMCA or the YWCA, a motel, a caravan park, friends or family. The young people had no other immediate choice and accepted separate accommodation, the young man ending up in a gender specific accommodation service and the young woman with the child in a female-only service.

During the period that these young people were housed, it became apparent there were child protection issues with the young woman and her daughter. On a number of occasions Sharley sought respite for herself and tried to place their daughter with her partner, the father. The housing service refused Devon permission to have the child with him as it was not acceptable for a young father to have his daughter with him in the shelter and there was no provision anywhere under the SAAP program to make accommodation available for the father. That was despite the fact, as the youth worker told me, that the mother obviously had problems looking after the child and there were a number of security and violence issues about her parenting.

The question I raise in this grievance speech is: whose duty of care is it to cater for young homeless men and their children and whose mandate does it come under? Does it always have to fall within the non-government welfare area for people to get this accommodation? What about the needs of the child? Surely they should be paramount in this issue.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): I want to refer today to a matter which has been brought to my attention and which I have in turn passed on to the Minister for Correctional Services. It is of concern and I want to bring it to the attention of members of the House. In March last year the Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs entered into a partnership with the Department of Community Services under which Community Services clients were employed to perform selected works in the Flinders Ranges National Park as part of the Formula Flinders project.

The aim of the Formula Flinders project is to upgrade tourist facilities within the Flinders Ranges National Park. Tasks have been performed which include the construction of walking trails, stone steps, retaining walls, camp sites, foot bridges, roads and so on. The works have been carried out under a user-pays system, with DEHAA paying all costs. This compares with many other Department for Correctional Services schemes, where that department pays communities to provide a service. Each work crew contains an average of four to six DCS clients who are supervised by a DCS staff member with assistance from DEHAA staff.

I am told that, to date, the program has resulted in the highest number of community service hours ever performed by DCS clients on any project in the northern region. The project has provided many Department of Correctional Services clients with education in work ethos and skills, making them far more employable in the future. In fact, I understand that a number of clients have found employment on the strength of the work that they have been able to do in the Flinders Ranges National Park. The program is also held in very high regard by the Aboriginal community, as many of the clients are Aborigines who are working on their traditional land.

Occupational health and safety issues have been minimal in the 14 months that the program has been running. Local support for the program is very strong. Local people recognise the quality of work that is being achieved and consider the program to be very successful. DEHAA has been extremely pleased, I understand, with the quality of work carried out by the DCS clients over the past 14 months. In fact, I understand that both departments have received a large number of very positive comments.

However, I am led to believe that the program has run into some problems, and it is suggested that it has run into problems at middle management level within the Department of Correctional Services. A decision recently was made by the DCS North Regional Manager to terminate the program. No satisfactory reason was given, and DCS showed little desire to work through any problems with DEHAA to reach a solution.

I am told that DEHAA has made a very large commitment to the partnership with the DCS in the Flinders Ranges National Park. I suggest that the collapse of this program will not only restrict DEHAA's ability to continue its upgrade of tourist developments in the Flinders Ranges National Park (which, I might say, is absolutely essential) but would also appear to limit the DCS's ability to fulfil its own core

business. It is difficult to see how a program with so many real, positive aspects can be closed down by one or two individuals, I am told, who have been given insufficient information to make an informal decision.

As I said earlier, I have taken this matter to the Minister for Correctional Services. I know that the Minister will provide me with a response, and I am sure that that response will satisfy those people who have made contact with me regarding this matter. It is a matter about which I feel strongly because, as I have pointed out to the House, it is a program which has worked well, which is helping the environment and national parks in the north, and which is helping clients of the Department for Correctional Services. I hope that a solution can be reached and that this program can be put in place again, for the reasons that I have indicated. I see it as a very important and a very well run project, and it is one that I would like to see continue.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): I would like to speak today in relation to events at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, particularly in relation to its maternity services. On Sunday, along with many others, I attended a rally at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The rally was 600 strong and consisted of members of a very wide and diverse community protesting about what is happening at the hospital in terms of its maternity services. Quite frankly, we have another complete bungle by this Government, and certainly by the Minister for Human Services.

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms STEVENS: Just listen and you will learn about it. Essentially, last week in Estimates, the Minister told us that he was considering that it would be feasible for there to be ongoing obstetrics services for women with a lower level of risk in terms of maternity services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He went on to say that he would be considering maintaining level one obstetrics at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital—and he also mentioned Modbury Hospital in that regard. Of course, that was run the next day in the *Advertiser* with the heading that all was saved at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in terms of maternity services. In fact, all was not saved at all: a level one service is a maternity service without a doctor. Quite frankly, that is a ridiculous and dangerous proposition. I must say I agree with the Leader of the Opposition's comment that having a maternity section without a doctor is like keeping a school open without teachers. It is plainly ridiculous.

I would like to back up what I am saying by reading a letter that I have received from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. The letter states:

I can assure you that the State committee of the Royal Australian New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists are clear and strong in its opposition to level one maternity services being conducted in metropolitan public hospitals in Adelaide. We are most concerned on the grounds of safety and believe that the situation is substantially different to that in private hospitals and country hospitals where level one services are provided.

After the first meeting of the Birthing Services Review Group there were many of us at that meeting who were relieved to feel that there was a consensus that level one services (defined by the Health Commission as no doctor on site) was not considered a feasible option to pursue for metropolitan public hospitals. At the second meeting there was general agreement that 'stand alone birthing units' was not an appropriate choice in Adelaide. As you can see from the enclosed letter to Professor Lesley Barclay on 25 June I have strongly disagreed with the statement in the minutes of the meeting of 17 June which stated that 'there was general agreement in the group that the recommendation should reflect level one services are

feasible'. In fact the question of level one services was not discussed in great detail and certainly the words 'general agreement' are both inappropriate and inaccurate.

The letter continues:

Our State Committee believes that the level one services would not only be compromising safety, but the public would not see them as a safe service and [they] would not be well supported.

A number of issues are raised in that letter—primarily, the fact that level one services are not safe, nor would they be well supported. It is quite clear from the response of members of the community on Sunday that they agree totally. The other point that arises from that letter is the interesting comment on the process—the fact that there seems to be quite a lot of disagreement within that group.

I would like to make a few points in relation to the way in which this matter has been handled by the Minister. First, with respect to these clinical reviews, there has never been a statement by the Minister to this House or anywhere else about their purpose, their scope and how the community can be involved. Members of that community have never been asked about their view in relation to that hospital's services. The Minister stands condemned. He had a first review. He was placed under pressure. He set up another committee to look at the matter again and there is now this committee, which has not even reported yet, but the Minister pre-empted its report last week and came out with something that he still has not consulted the community about. The people in the western suburbs have every right to be angry and they need to know that they will have our full support in fighting this issue.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise to speak on behalf of the sailors of the Royal Australian Navy's submarine force. I call on the Federal Government to move quickly on the half billion dollar injection of funds into the Collins class submarine project at the Australian Submarine Corporation. As a former Lieutenant Colonel in the Army, with most of that time spent in Army Special Forces, I served on submarines on a number of occasions. I went to sea on Oberon class submarines, from which Special Forces insert, using inflatable craft, canoes and various other means, so that they can carry out their mission.

During my time on submarines, I had occasion to observe the very professional way in which the submariners conduct their business. They are indeed an elite group within the Royal Australian Navy. They go to sea for many weeks at a time, working on submarines in extremely cramped conditions. There is a high level of self-discipline and professionalism evident amongst submariners. They are, indeed, a breed apart from general service sailors operating from surface combatants, the operational environment and conditions involved in submarine work being quite special and making very special calls upon individuals.

We maintained a force of around six Oberon class submarines, of which only one I understand is still operational. That means that the crews of those boats are now either on the Collins class submarines or in some form of retraining. I have a real concern that, if the delays associated with getting the Collins class submarines on line endure much longer, these excellent sailors, this fabulous human capability that we have established within the Australian Defence Force, may be lost to us. The most pressing danger is that we will lose the first class human expertise in submarine warfare we have developed over many years, as disappointed sailors, working away from their families, many of whom are located in

Western Australia, become frustrated at the delays and lack of capability and, in so doing, march with their feet to leave the service.

We are talking not about thousands of people but hundreds of people. This is a small, highly professional group. These people are, in my view, the Olympic athletes of submarine warfare. There are very few better anywhere in the world. The Australian submarine force has been widely recognised as being at the forefront, and as one entered the former submarine base at *HMAS Platypus* in Sydney, one was greeted at the door by a photograph of the *USS Enterprise* taken from an Oberon class boat periscope where, on exercise, it effectively sank the US carrier from extremely close range using torpedo simulation in circumstances which even the US Navy found quite remarkable. These people have a proven track record of service going back to Australian submariners' performance during the First World War. We have a responsibility to ensure that these professionals have the best submarine available in the world to do their job defending our sea approaches.

There have been problems with the submarine which have been well documented in the media, but the *Collins* is potentially a world best submarine. It has some serious problems. These problems need to be fixed and fixed quickly. If we do not, we may finish up with no-one to man the vessels, and the decades we have spent building up one of the best teams of submariners in the world will have been wasted. We need to get on with the business of getting these boats finished. We need to find the funding to do it. We need to tackle the problems associated with the weapons system, the engines, noise and a range of other issues. We need to get those submarines on line and in service. We need to give our excellent submariners and the sailors of the RAN a first class capability to man.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): I would like also to make some comments today about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which has been a beacon in the western suburbs for more than 45 years now. I would acknowledge and congratulate the local community for an outstanding response to the public rally held last Sunday. This was a very important public rally which left people in no doubt about the significance of what is taking place with respect to the downgrading of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's maternity services.

I was somewhat astounded to read the following day in the *Advertiser* that the Minister for Human Services (Hon. Dean Brown) said, 'It was a waste of time and effort.' Perhaps he should have been down there himself and he could have actually said that direct to the people. He could have said it to all those who attended, including the mothers and babies, the fathers, the pregnant mothers who are soon to deliver their babies, as well as all of the nurses and the various community representatives, such as the users of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and also the ethnic leaders.

The level 1, which has been highlighted by the Government as saving the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, is no saving of the services at all. At present the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has some 1 200 deliveries per year. The Government has proposed that the services will be downgraded to level 1, meaning there will not be a full-time obstetrician at the hospital. What sort of signal and message is this sending out to people in the western community? What type of message is that sending out to mothers, expectant mothers, and families in regard to future birthing that will occur at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? It is quite clearly sending out a

direct message to pregnant women that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is not the place to go for their birth.

What would you do if you were in a situation faced with this type of announcement made by the Government, where it is downgrading the services in regard to what will be on offer at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? It would put doubt in your mind, it would raise questions, and you would think again about whether you would go again to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This announcement will cut by about 50 per cent the number of births that will occur at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This is quite clearly what the Government wants to do.

What we will find in the near future, down the track, when the numbers are reduced, primarily as a result of this announcement about the so-called saving of the service at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the next announcement will be to cut out the service altogether. This announcement is about downgrading the service which will result in fewer births occurring at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, thus strangling the services offered to people in the western suburbs, and downgrading the role the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can have in the western suburbs. All of a sudden, down the track, the Minister (who refers to the public rally last Sunday as being a waste of time and effort) will announce that the service will be cut out altogether. We have seen the trickery and fraudulence that has occurred before, and this is simply not good enough.

The people in the western suburbs will not cop this Government making these types of announcements and not being courageous enough to even front up at a public rally to put forward its position. The Minister has no credibility, and I am talking about the most senior Minister in this Government. The most important and senior Minister in the Government was not prepared to front up last Sunday, with the 600 or 700 local residents who were there, to explain this Government's policy, and put on the public record and share with all those mothers and babies who turned up on Sunday what this Government announcement is all about. Plenty of people from the Opposition fronted up, including the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister for Health, but not one person from the Government was able to front up and explain to all those mothers and babies what is occurring here from this Government.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Members are well aware that we are in the midst of taxation reform, essentially focused on the GST, given that that legislation has been approved in Federal Parliament. Before addressing the main issue today, I would like to commend the Prime Minister for announcing yesterday that he will be looking at the matter of capital gains tax which is acting as a very grave disincentive for people who want to invest in Australia. That applies not only to people in South Australia, of course, but right across the country. Australians are at a disadvantage in terms of investment because of our current capital gains legislation. I am pleased that the Prime Minister has given a commitment that he will address that issue, and it is an important part of the tax reform agenda. The other aspect which also needs to be addressed and which has been only partly addressed thus far is the question of bracket creep, a topic to which I have previously referred. However, I applaud the Prime Minister for that announcement yesterday.

I would like to focus on the need to reform another major aspect of our society, and that is the welfare system. I am not advocating that we spend less on welfare but I believe that we

should be targeting it much more effectively. In fact, I would be quite happy if we increased the allocation. What we have across Australia is a system that has grown like topsy. It is inconsistent from State to State in terms of concessions that are made available to people by virtue of age, and so on. It is inconsistent between Territory and State, and what we have is really a hotchpotch.

At the moment, as I understand it, nearly half the population is in receipt of some kind of welfare benefit, whether that be a veteran's entitlement, unemployment benefits, Austudy or Abstudy, and the list goes on. I believe it is time (and I have written to the Prime Minister accordingly) that there be a thorough review of our welfare system because those who are genuinely in need deserve more. Some people at the moment, I believe, are getting around some of the rules in order to obtain a benefit when they should not be, and I believe all members could provide examples of where they are surprised to see certain people receiving entitlements covering such areas as Austudy and other related benefits.

If one looks at the matter of legal aid, one sees that often the people who should be entitled to it do not get it, that is, people in the lower salary range and those who are supporting a family. Those sorts of people do not get any significant concessions on anything and they are the people who are often in greatest need.

I am not having a shot at pensioners. I remember that, in his latter years, my father was a pensioner who owned his own house and, in many ways, he was a lot better off as a pensioner living in his own house than he ever was trying to support six children on a low wage. I am not saying that we should take away from pensioners in that circumstance, but I believe that the most forgotten section of our community are those families on a low income who have children and where often one parent is not working. People on, say, \$28 000 a year do not receive any concessions or entitlements.

We have the bizarre situation where a relative of mine, who is a millionaire and past the age of 60, can get a concession in terms of an airfare to travel to the Gold Coast, yet an unemployed person cannot even get a concession on a bus to try to obtain a job at Port Augusta. It is bizarre when that situation prevails.

Indeed, it is an issue that goes beyond just the State Government. One cannot change a system involving pensioners and self-funded retirees unless it is done on a national basis because no State or Territory Government can pick up the tab. In fairness to self-funded retirees, as well as in fairness to other sections of the community, there should be a national system. We need a national approach and, to that end, I urge the Federal Government to institute a thorough overhaul of the whole welfare system involving the States and Territories, to look at anomalies and to ensure that the people who are in greatest need get extra help and that those people who are currently getting entitlements by manipulation are detected and cut out of the system. As I indicated, that covers a whole range of areas, not simply in terms of pensions but all sorts of assistance. The system is long overdue for overhaul, and I would like to see the Prime Minister pick up this topic as his next major item.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I move:

That the committee have leave to sit during the sitting of the House on Thursday 8 July; and that the time for bringing up the report of the committee be extended until Thursday 29 July 1999.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): I bring up the report of Estimates Committee A and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON (Heysen): I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee A and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I bring up the report of Estimates Committee B and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee B and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

The Hon. J. HALL (Minister for Tourism): I move:

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): Thank you, Sir, I will fill the breach while we look for a few members.

Mr Venning: You are all by yourself.

Mr CLARKE: The member for Schubert should not be too worried about organising the Opposition benches—one had to only see the display given by the Minister for Environment at Question Time today. I think the honourable member should spend more time talking to the Minister about organising her department and her responsibilities than admonishing those on this side of the House.

I would like to make a couple of comments with respect to the Estimates Committees because I think they can be very valuable. Over the course of the two weeks for which the Committees sat, the Opposition certainly found them very valuable in that, through the media, we were able to bring to the public's attention a number of stories as a result of Ministers' answers or, in some cases, their non-answers, contortions or the misrepresentations that they have made in this House either previously or during the course of the Estimates Committees.

However, I think the procedure can be better run. In saying that, I do not mean any reflection on the Chairman of those two Committees. Rather, I believe it is far too structured. I know (and this happened in the Labor Party days when we were in office) that Government Ministers are asked Dorothy Dix questions by Government members so that the Ministers can waste a lot of the Committee's time answering pre-prepared questions so that Ministers can give pre-prepared answers. The Minister in the House at the moment,

the Minister for Tourism, was a classic example of that scenario in one of the Committee sessions to which I attended.

That is all designed to reduce the amount of time that is available for Opposition members to question Government Ministers as to the conduct of their affairs in the running of their departments. A confident and competent Minister would turn around and say to the Opposition on the day of their Estimates Committee hearing, 'This is the Opposition's day; no Dorothy Dixers from the Government side. You can put all the questions to me'—except perhaps where some Government members might like to ask questions without notice with respect to their own electorate issues or subjects which are close to their own heart or interest and which are genuine questions without notice to the Minister of the day.

That would be far better for parliamentary democracy and accountability of the Executive arm of Government to the public if the Estimates Committees were conducted in that fashion. It would also open up the scope for members on both sides of the House who are not necessarily members of those committees to come along and ask questions relating to their own interests or to their own electorate. It would also mean that Ministers would need to be on their toes and be on top of their portfolios, as would their advisers. But we have this nonsense—and I know that it has been perpetuated over the years by all Governments—of public servants spending hours and hours of time preparing answers for Ministers to Dorothy Dix questions by Government backbenchers.

The workings of the Estimates Committees should be thoroughly looked at in the future. Of course, we cannot prevent Ministers from using Dorothy Dixers under the Standing Orders or under the current set-up of Parliament, but it is something that all members of this House should think very seriously about, because the Liberal Party will be in opposition after the next election and its shadow Ministers in waiting and the like will experience the same frustrations that we have experienced. I was just talking to my colleague the member for Hanson about the 40 minutes that was allocated to workplace services, which includes WorkCover. This is a subject dealing with industrial relations, occupational health and safety and workers' compensation. So many of those queries come into our office, as every member here knows, yet a total of 40 minutes was allocated out of a whole day to quiz the Minister of the day on that one subject.

I believe that we can still do the job between 11 a.m. and 10 p.m. but we can do it sensibly, with the Minister of the day recognising that they are basically on trial for the conduct of their department, and as long as they are on top of it they should not have any trouble in answering the questions. Indeed, it would be better for the governance of the State if it were done on that basis, rather than the time-wasting claptrap that goes on with Dorothy Dix questions and long-winded answers from Ministers who are obviously too frightened to expose themselves to the full rigours of parliamentary scrutiny.

The other point that I would like to make with respect to the Estimates Committees relates to the other place, and I have raised this on past occasions. Unfortunately, because of the time constraints, during the Estimates Committee I was not able to ask the Premier the question that I would like to have asked him, which relates to having the Legislative Council sit during the time we have Estimates Committee hearings. There is no reason why Estimates Committee B could not sit in the Old Chamber while the Legislative Council sits. The fact that a Legislative Council Minister for

one day out of that two week period would need to be in one of the Committee hearings is neither here nor there. They can often be away, in any event, on parliamentary or Government business during a parliamentary sitting week, and the usual pairing arrangements could be entered into. With advance notice to the Opposition Parties and Independents, etc, there are no real problems.

I find it odd that in what is left of this parliamentary sitting period—which I understand expires in the first week of August—we will experience a number of late nights while we try to clear up Government business. We have the Local Government Bill and a whole range of amendments to it. We have the very contentious legislation dealing with industrial relations, and we have a number of other pieces of legislation that require careful thought and consideration. There will need to be working up of amendments or compromises with Parliamentary Counsel involved, and that is best done not at 3 o'clock in the morning as members of Parliament are grappling with their tiredness and exhaustion, particularly as shadow Ministers, Ministers and Parliamentary Counsel are trying to arrive at a set of words which will pass into law and which will affect all citizens of this State.

People deserve a bit better consideration with respect to legislation. The Legislative Council could have sat on those days when we sat here in Estimates, and could have been dealing with the business it currently has before it. It could be done in a very orderly fashion so that we do not have this last minute ragtag rush. As I understand it, the Industrial Relations Bill will not be debated today. It was originally on the Government Notice Paper for the Legislative Council today but, for whatever reason, it has now been put off until tomorrow. So, members can see that we are going to lead ourselves into some monumental sitting weeks, when there will be legislation by exhaustion rather than by a careful analysis of the options before us and what amendments may or may not be agreed to between the other place and the House of Assembly.

It would be far better not only for the health of members of Parliament but also in terms of greater efficiencies and expenditure of taxpayers' money if the Legislative Council sat on those occasions rather than being absent. It is not as if members of the Legislative Council were out beavering away with their constituents and shepherding hundreds of constituents' inquiries and the like through their front doors on North Terrace during the two weeks that we were in the Estimates Committee hearings. Largely, you could walk the corridors where the Legislative Council offices are, which are also where their electorate offices are, and it is not a case of the lights being on and nobody home; frankly, the lights were not even on and nobody was home, either. It would be far more beneficial if we rearranged the schedule for the sittings of the Legislative Council in line with my comments.

I close my contribution by coming back to my point that the Estimates Committees perform a very valuable role for the Opposition of the day, in particular—and that is how it should be, in terms of putting any Government under pressure and for Ministers to be held accountable. But the way it is conducted at the moment frankly degrades it, in the sense of the waste of time on Dorothy Dix questions. I repeat that any Minister worth their salt and worth their salary and their preparedness to undertake the oath of office ought to be confident enough to handle questions without notice, true questions without notice, and subject themselves to the scrutiny of the members of this House without the time

wasting exercise that we saw many Ministers engage in during the Estimates Committees sittings.

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I would like to join with my colleague the member for Ross Smith, who virtually took the words out of my mouth. I have been very concerned. This was my second experience in the budget estimates process and I must say, quite frankly, that I was appalled last year at the process and the amount of time we spent. As has already been indicated, Oppositions mainly look at it as an opportunity to get a free kick against the Government of the day. I think that our time could be much more productively spent in this Parliament. I was going to ask a question of the Parliament as to how much the process actually costs the people of South Australia. I would say that it would run into millions of dollars, when we think of the time that the Ministers and all the other members spend in this Chamber.

It is not only those of us who are in the Parliament but all the Government advisers and CEOs who sit here. I was surprised to see one Minister last week who had something like 15 advisers sitting behind him. I wonder whether their time could not be more productively spent, not only during the estimates process but also leading up to it. We all know various bureaucrats who work in Government departments who spend hundreds of hours preparing answers to questions that might be asked of them. This process could be a fruitful one. However, it should be an honest process and not, I would suggest, a farce for the people of South Australia. All these people could be providing us with answers, but it is more a fudging exercise. If we as members of Parliament really want to hold up our heads, we have to be honest with the community and not run away from the truth of the parliamentary process.

I am a novice at this, but I find it difficult to understand why members of the Upper House cannot participate in the process. I know that perhaps they cannot be trusted with money Bills. I am not sure about appropriation, but it would seem to me that they could spend their time much more productively rather than just sitting in the gallery watching the rest of us sitting there from 11 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night. One day I was here from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m. but managed to get one only question to a Minister. I could have spent my time better in my electorate answering the needs of my community. With that, I cannot say whether I approve or otherwise of this process, but I wish that both the Government and the Opposition could get together and make this a much more open process and more beneficial to the people of South Australia.

Mr LEWIS (Hammond): My remarks range across the board. In the first instance, though, let me disabuse the member for Norwood. It is not a matter of whether or not we can trust the Legislative Council with money Bills. What matters—

Mr Clarke: You can't trust them at all.

Mr LEWIS: I don't reflect—as Standing Orders require that I should not—upon the Upper House. The fact remains that the House of Assembly has a Bill before it which is the Bill to raise revenue and to define how Government proposes to expend that revenue during the next financial year, that is, 1999-2000 in this instance. That measure is a Bill. It is not a question as would be considered by, say, a select committee. It is part of the process in the consideration of a piece of legislation by this Chamber, and this is the Chamber which, for hundreds of years, has developed its authority and

continues to assert its authority to determine what taxes will be imposed and how much it will cost citizens in the collection of those taxes and the way in which those taxes will be used. This House, the House of the people which has representatives of all citizens from electorates of whatever size and composition regardless of the electorate system, the Lower House, the House of the common people, has the responsibility to do that.

Mr Hanna: What does that make the other House?

Mr LEWIS: It makes the other House what it always has been—intended to review the legislation passed through this Chamber from the point of view of how that will effect the affairs of the State in relation to what they are now as to what they might become. That is what 'review' means.

An honourable member: But they're democratically elected now, aren't they?

Mr LEWIS: They may well be democratically elected at present. That is a moot point that the honourable member makes. Many of them are people not at all known to the electorate. They are merely endorsed by political Parties, and the electorate is encouraged by a public relations exercise to vote for the Party, and well over 90 per cent of the electorate is happy to do that. That is all very well while we are not in troubled times. However, we have a system that delivers advantages to us, and there are two aspects. First, there are people like the member for Norwood—and I suspect many other members in this place—who do not bother to try to understand what that system is, why it is so and what it delivers for us. They then make suggestions as to how they would change that system, in a reactionary manner to the way in which they think it works and what they think it is. They are then at risk of throwing out the baby with the bathwater, I think is the old expression. For those places that do not have Upper Houses such as New Zealand and Queensland, there is a hell of a swing between the extremes in politics, because only one Chamber makes all the laws, only one Chamber may examine what is going on and what Ministers are doing or not doing. Therefore, by definition—

Mr Clarke: Queensland!

Mr LEWIS: Yes, Queensland I said—in that Chamber the Party of Government has an absolute majority and may change the Standing Orders to suit themselves. Ministers can do as they please—and did. That is why they discovered they needed a Criminal Justice Commission to examine what had been going on during the years that the National Party ruled in Queensland—and I said 'ruled' not 'governed'. They ruled, and they abused the Public Service, the police, the process and the trust.

An honourable member interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LEWIS: There is no question, Mr Deputy Speaker, that that is what happened in Queensland. It is now documented as historical fact. New Zealand is not much different. There are even people over there who think that sheep ought to get a vote. I know very well—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: They would have to be the pretty ones, as the Minister for Primary Industries points out, for my benefit.

Mr Clarke: The sheep did get a vote under Playford.

Mr LEWIS: Never. Not at all. In fact, the member for Ross Smith ought to go back and revisit this ridiculous nonsense which Donald Dunstan got the people of South Australia to believe—that Playford governed without a mandate throughout much of his time. It is only arguable that he did that on two occasions, and it is not statistically

possible to prove that he did it then, just because there were not equally populated electorates, plus or minus 10 per cent as we have them now, does not mean that Playford did not have the support of the majority of people in South Australia. If you were to take demographically a two Party preferred voted in any of those elections—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: In many instances, as the member for Spence knows, the Labor Party never endorsed candidates in a large number of seats.

Mr Atkinson: Labor? The Liberals didn't endorse.

Mr LEWIS: No, Labor didn't. I remember as a child that the only opposition that Sir Thomas Playford had in the electorate in which I lived, which was his electorate, was a Communist Party member called Dr Finger.

An honourable member: Goldfinger!

Mr LEWIS: Well, I don't know whether he was gold, silver, uranium, platinum, or anything else for that matter. He might have been organic. It does not matter, he was a decent man. He believed what he advocated quite sincerely, but he had no empathy with the people. He simply put his ideas out into the public domain in the hope that someone would read them. They did read them and they ridiculed them because he was out of touch with reality. He had no empathy with the people from whom he sought election. Indeed, his nomination in the seat of Gumeracha was more a political stunt, Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would know.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Chair asks the member for Hammond to come back to the Bill.

Mr LEWIS: Indeed, Sir. In the context of the remarks I am making about the relationship between this Chamber and the other and the way in which funds are appropriated for the purpose of the Parliament under the line of the Premier, I am disappointed that neither the Opposition nor, for that matter, the present Government seem inclined to change the way in which Parliament gets its appropriations, because too many members do not really understand the benefits of the system that we have. I was relating to the House what I have seen elsewhere to illustrate the point that I make about the way in which we get our funds. It strikes me as quaint—indeed, quite inappropriate—that the Premier, whomever that is at any point of time, has the power to decide through the Premier's portfolio what funds come to this Parliament, rather than the Parliament itself.

It is a matter of confidence in the Government. If the Parliament itself decided that the amount that the Premier had decided to allocate to the Parliament was not adequate, that represents, in this Chamber, a vote of no confidence in the Government and would bring it down. That is wrong, because government is about, more particularly, the effect of law and the way in which it is administered by Ministers, by some degree competent or otherwise, on the public polity, whereas appropriations for Parliament ought to be a separate measure. I have said before and will say again that we should pass the appropriations for both Houses, through both Houses as a separate piece of legislation, before the Government introduces appropriations for any of its departments or for other purposes.

A proposition ought to come from the Joint Parliamentary Service Committee to the Chamber as an annual report as to what is required to run the Parliament; it should not come from any Minister of the Government. Whilst a Government Minister makes that proposition in the motion to appropriate the revenue for Parliament itself, that Minister has the sovereign power over the Parliament. The only question I

asked of the Premier (and it was not of him personally that I asked the question in any sense at all; rather, it was based on that very principle) was about the way in which Parliament does not get appropriate consideration by the Executive. I made the point that, although the Parliament does not yet have the report of the detail from the Premier, we are nonetheless debating the report, the two Committees having considered the measures. We do not have the report as to how much it costs to establish all the equipment and rent the facilities in which that equipment is installed in the Premier's office over on North Terrace, for instance, to monitor the media. We do not have that. We do not know what it costs yet.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: Exactly. We do not know how many people work how many hours and what it costs the public purse to monitor the media. All that is made available to me and other members of the Government, on request and it ought not to be; it ought to be there for us to use as a matter of principle, the same as the clipping service in the Library, for the printed media.

Mr Atkinson: Hear, hear!

Mr LEWIS: I hear the member for Spence say 'Hear, hear!', but the Labor Party in government when I raised the matter with Premier Bannon did sweet FA about it during that time.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: Far out! To my mind, that—

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask your ruling on whether 'sweet FA' is parliamentary.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I suggest to the member for Hammond that it is not appropriate to use those initials.

Mr LEWIS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Albeit, XYZ is what they did about it.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: Zero, or less.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LEWIS: We then find that Ministers duplicate such equipment. That revenue is appropriated for their purposes, but it is still taxpayers' money and it has to be paid for—and it has been used to buy more equipment to monitor radio, television and maybe pay TV (I do not know) to pick up items of particular interest. All that should be done—and the Leader of the Opposition also does it (whether the Leader of the Opposition in another place does it or not, I do not know). It does not really matter, but there is a duplication of expenditure that is unnecessarily undertaken. In this day and age only one set of equipment needs to be owned in the public interest for the purposes of all members of Parliament, be they the Premier through to the least of the Ministers outside Cabinet and other members of both Houses of Parliament.

It ought to be here in the Library and the staff members who use it ought to be employed in the Library, and a committee of the Parliament, a subcommittee of the Joint Parliamentary Service Committee, as it were, ought to determine how best to do the job in the Library in members' interests. Why does the Librarian currently maintain a newspaper clipping service? It is because he did so last year and the year before that. It is a tradition. There is nothing in law requiring him to do that, and it is distressing to me that we do not have the same service for monitoring the other

arms of the media, as it were, the electronic media, radio and television, provided through the Library.

We do not have access to that and it is the decision of the Librarian to not do that. Of course, in the first instance the decision to clip the newspapers was taken before television and radio came into existence and it was a decision that was not taken by the Librarian of the day. Rather, it was taken by the Library Committee, which existed throughout all those years until the Joint Parliamentary Service Committee in its current form was proposed by the Hon. Martyn Evans, now a member of the House of Representatives, during the period when he was one of the people holding the balance of power, as a predominantly Labor voting member of this place. There were also a couple of other Independent members, the Hon. Terry Groom and the Hon. Norm Peterson, who was Speaker. Whilst he understood those things about which I speak, he had no inclination to insist that the Government of the day do anything about it. He agreed with my view but thought 'maybe some other time, perhaps'. He did not want to offend the Premier, as it turned out. Well, 10 years on we still do not have any change.

It is still unsatisfactory because it wastes public money. You need only one group of people, or one person, doing that monitoring, and you need it in the Library, and you can access the information then through a local area network direct from your computer workstation and look at whatever item you wish to see, from any current affairs program on television or listen to any item from radio that would then be kept on the record, digitally, so that it did not take up a lot of space and was not very expensive to retrieve.

All those things go to the point that Parliament is only as effective as it makes itself. Parliament's authority is only as great as it determines itself to exercise, and Parliament at present does not exercise anywhere near sufficient of its proper authority, such as is the case with the House of Commons, to ensure that we have what I consider to be an adequate parliamentary democracy. What we have got here, though, is a hell of a lot better than what they have in New Zealand or Queensland, to the point of departure whence I came for the member for Norwood, because there it is still possible for Ministers to deceive and get away without review at all—

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: No.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: The member for Norwood would know that, if a Minister in one place manages, as it were, to misunderstand or otherwise avoid answering a question, sooner or later the other place will call it out and the information will be obtained. Therefore, I do not see that it is wise for us to contemplate the abolition of the other House. What we need to do is probably look at its structure. I strongly support the view that reform of the Legislative Council is needed. However, part of the question is not its abolition. In my judgment a sane thing would be to have five or six regions within the State, say, three in the metropolitan area and two in the country, with perhaps two members being elected from each of those five regions and, in addition to that, have some elected at large, in which case, one would retire at each election from those five regions. You would therefore have five people being elected that way and another six being elected at large.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: I do not know what majority or otherwise it would bring. But it would make sure that you had a far more

representative Chamber there with the capacity to elect people with specific expertise, as it were, to tidy up the way in which review of legislation and Government practice is undertaken within that Chamber more effectively than can be done in this Chamber. Many of the committees in this Chamber are inappropriately located here.

The other farce to which I draw attention is that we pay our committees at different rates, and that is dopey. I do not see any particular merit in paying the Economic and Finance Committee members and Chair at a higher rate than the other committees of the Parliament and providing that committee with a car for its Chairman as part of the sinecure. They are unnecessarily anomalous provisions of the practice of the Parliament as it stands, and they cannot be justified.

Mr Hanna: They are for powerbrokers and troublemakers.

Mr LEWIS: Whatever the case. I do not reflect on them either way in that respect. People know who the committees are, what they are paid and how they are composed. My belief is that, if we want public respect again, we must do things in this Parliament which will restore public trust. One of those things is to consider the Bill for the appropriation of revenue both in a debate on its merits as well as in the Committee stage. The Estimates Committees are quite an appropriate way to do it. The practices that have grown up as a matter of convenience in the byplay that goes on between Opposition and Government is ridiculous, and that is not what it was set up to do and it would not be permitted if it was a committee of the whole House which did the review. The last point I want to make is that it was quite wrong for the Government to reduce the number of Estimates Committees from 13 to 10. That simply imposed far greater pressure on time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): I think the Estimates Committee process is a good one and, like the member for Hammond, I was disappointed that the number of committees was reduced from 13 to 10 because it reduced the time for scrutiny of the budget. It was a measure that the Government took partly for the purpose of reducing scrutiny of the budget. In the portfolio for which I am Opposition spokesman, there were several hours fewer to scrutinise the Attorney-General (Hon. K.T. Griffin) than there were under the old system because he now has to share his Committee with his junior Minister, the member for Mawson, who is Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services.

The member for Hammond made a point about the rational arrangement of electronic media monitoring. Monitoring of the electronic media—radio and television—came in during the Dunstan Labor Government. At that time, the Dunstan Government set up television monitoring and taping of radio as a unit within the Premier's Department, and the then Opposition referred to it as 5DD, radio 5 Don Dunstan. However, when the Liberals came to power, they considered it their duty to maintain and extend this service, and now we have five people on salaries between \$30 000 and \$35 000 a year monitoring television and radio full time for the Government.

That interests me, because I use radio a great deal. I like appearing on live radio programs on radio 5DN and 5AA and I have long participated in the *Nightline* program on radio 5AA hosted by Bob Francis. I have been aware over the seven years that I have appeared on that program that every

word I say is monitored by the Government, that someone is paid to listen to tapes of conversations between Bob Francis and me and to type down each word we say to one another. I accept that no Government member could be bothered listening to Ray Fewings' *Adelaide Tonight* on radio 5DN. The Deputy Premier feigns a yawn, and I will convey that to the host.

I accept also that no Government member could be bothered listening to the people who call Bob Francis's *Nightline* program on radio 5AA, and the Deputy Premier gestures towards me, but dozens of people every night avail themselves of the opportunity to express their views on radio. I accept that I am going to be monitored and I know that the only interest that members opposite show in these programs is at election time when they all queue up to have something to say and to bring themselves to the attention of the listeners. What worries me is the Attorney-General's use of these transcripts because I would have thought that they were public property.

The member for Hammond said that the Ministers ought to share these transcripts with the Parliament, and therefore every member of the Parliament, and I endorse that, but I have no hope that these transcripts will be installed in the library. My concern about the use that the Attorney-General was making of these transcripts was expressed in a parliamentary question I asked on Tuesday 10 November, as follows:

Has the Attorney-General ordered a transcript of any parts of the Bob Francis *Nightline* program on radio 5AA on 2 and 3 September 1998 and, if so, how much did it cost? Was a copy of this transcript conveyed to a person outside the Public Service and, if so, for what purpose?

That question was asked in November and well into this year no answer was provided. The Attorney-General knows the incident to which I am referring. So I wrote to the Attorney and asked whether he could inform me of the answers to those questions, because I would have thought he could answer them in a trice. The Attorney-General has given me the answer today, and it is as follows:

The Attorney-General has advised that transcripts or parts of various programs are obtained from time to time but detailed records of the movement of those individual transcripts are not kept because there is no good reason for keeping such records.

That is just a cover-up. The Attorney-General sends these transcripts out to various members of the public of his choice—not public servants, Ministers or backbenchers—with a note that they might like to see what dreadful views the Labor Party is expressing. In one case, he encouraged a person to sue Mr Bob Francis for remarks that he had made on radio. The Attorney-General at public expense acquired a transcript of the radio 5AA program on 2 and 3 September 1998 and wrote to Lindy Powell, QC, asking her if she would like to sue Bob Francis for the remarks he made on radio. Ms Powell did not listen to the program but the Attorney thought he would draw it to her attention and, as a result, proceedings were inaugurated against Mr Francis by Ms Powell. I do not comment on the merits of that defamation case. All I say is that it seems to me a highly improper use of the privileged access to radio transcripts that Mr Griffin has. Having said that, now that Mr Griffin has set the precedent, I advise that we will have a close look at it when we get into Government.

Staying with the question of the Government's use of radio transcripts, I note that the Minister for Police stumbled into raising this question during the Estimates Committee.

During six years as an Opposition member on Estimates Committees, I do not think that I have ever got angry with a public servant until this year's Estimates Committees. The public servant I got angry with is Mr John Paget, the head of the Correctional Services Department. The Minister for Correctional Services smiles, because he knows what is coming. I asked this question of Mr Paget (which I had asked of him over the phone some weeks previously):

Will the Minister tell the Committee why prisoner Angela Sinclair and prisoner Gina Agostinelli were allowed leave from prison to attend a church service unaccompanied by Correctional Services Department staff so soon into their, in one case, 17 year non-parole period and in the other case a non-parole period of 16 years and nine months, and were any relatives of the victims of Angela Sinclair and Gina Agostinelli registered with the department for the purpose of being notified of the prisoner's application for parole and their release and, if not, has the department notified any relatives who might have complained of the prisoners' leave of their entitlement to be registered and, if so, have any acted on that entitlement?

I do not have any difficulty with prisoners—even long-term prisoners who are only at an early stage in their incarceration—having leave from prison for good purposes. I accept that prisoners will one day be released and, therefore, there is a need for them to have day release to acclimatise to society and get ready for their release. I am even willing to accept that early in a life sentence that may be appropriate. But my point in asking that question—as I asked it on radio and as I asked it of Mr Paget privately—were whether it is appropriate that they have leave unaccompanied by departmental staff so soon into a life sentence, and whether it is appropriate that the registered next of kin of their victims not be informed of their day release? There was a real risk in these two cases that the relatives of the murder victims would see these prisoners in the street or in a public place and say, 'I did not know that they were being released after two or three years in prison.' There was a risk of that. So, it was a legitimate question to ask.

Mr Leon Byner, the host of the afternoon program on Radio 5AA, asked me to come on his program and comment on this, and I did, in exactly the terms I am now commenting to the House. Mr Byner asked me whether heads should roll as a result of these two day releases. The Minister will be interested to know that I answered 'No' and said that it is something that ought to be the subject of further questioning. Before I went on that Leon Byner program I rang Bill Powell, the media liaison officer of Correctional Services, and said, 'Can you give me a bit of background about these cases so that I do not make any mistakes or make any unfair criticism of the Government or the department?' He said that he could not give me the same briefing he had given every other journalist who has applied, because he had an instruction from the Minister's office that Opposition MPs are not to be briefed. He said he would have to refer that to the head of the department. So, I spoke to Mr Paget, the head of the department. He said that Mr Powell was right. He could not brief me unless he got a clearance from the Minister's office.' I asked for clearance from the Minister's staff and the answer was 'No.'

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Who did you ask? It's new to me.

Mr ATKINSON: I will give the Minister the name afterwards. So, I was trying to comment sensibly on penal and correctional services matters and trying to be as bipartisan as I possibly could, and I could not get a briefing from the Minister's office. But, of course, after I did the interview,

Mr Paget, the head of Correctional Services, sent transcripts of what I had said to what he calls his stakeholders—namely, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services—to give the impression that I am opposed to all day leave for any prisoners, in all circumstances. But it gets worse than that. He interleaved with those transcripts other transcripts of Mr Bob Francis criticising the day release for a remandee, Anthony Smith, of Devon Park (who is charged with armed robbery), to visit a dying relative in the Royal Adelaide Hospital, accompanied by Correctional Services staff.

So, to make it clear what is happening here, there is one transcript of me talking to Leon Byner about Angela Sinclair and Gina Agostinelli during the daytime and there is a second transcript of Mr Francis, off his own bat, criticising the day release of Anthony Smith—by the way, Mr Smith escaped while visiting his relative in the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Nevertheless, I think that the day leave for the purpose for which it was given was correct, and I support it. Mr Francis's criticism of this was interleaved with an interview conducted on a different day, at a different time, with a different host, so as to give the impression that I opposed day release for all Aboriginal prisoners in this State. So, quite naturally, an officer from the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services wrote to me saying that it was distressed by my remarks, and an officer from the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement wrote to me saying that it was distressed by my remarks and asked me to refrain from making the release of Aboriginal prisoners to visit ill relatives in hospital a political football. Officers from those two organisations wrote to me in those terms.

When I asked this question in the Estimates Committee the Minister said (knowing the facts at the time he made these remarks to the Estimates Committee):

... it is a question that I expected the member for Spence to ask, given that I had people contact me after the member for Spence, I understand, agreed on 5AA to ask a series of questions around all these issues. I have been waiting for that. It disappoints me somewhat in that not only have I received telephone calls about what the member for Spence said but I have also received a series of letters in which people have been outraged by the member for Spence's perceived attitude to trying to rehabilitate people through programs within the—

Then, he was interrupted by interjections from me.

The Minister's head of Correctional Services provided disinformation to the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and to the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services, that is, he provided information from the Bob Francis program to which I had not contributed. In fact, I had made no references whatever to Anthony Smith in any public appearance. So, I wrote back to the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, and I am pleased to say that Syd Sparrow, the director of the movement, has written back to me apologising for the letter that it sent to me. But it is not Syd Sparrow's fault and it is not the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement's fault. It is John Paget's fault. I am very disappointed that, knowing the facts of this matter, the Minister continues to defend his public servant. And he nods his head and says that it is quite satisfactory in his view to at public expense obtain transcripts of two different radio programs and then to interleave them or cut and paste them so as to give the impression to stakeholders in the Correctional Services system that an Opposition member hold views which he does not hold. I am very disappointed that the Minister is willing to support such conduct by the head of his department, and I am also—

Mr Lewis interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: And I am glad that the member for Hammond says he does not support it: I am glad of that support, member for Hammond. But I am also surprised that the Minister is willing to embark, in the Estimates Committee, on repeating the false innuendo created by the interleaving of transcripts. I am very disappointed that the Minister would do that.

Mr Hanna: It's shabby.

Mr ATKINSON: It is, as the member for Mitchell says, a shabby episode. Mr Paget has to realise that, in being the head of the Correctional Services Department, he is serving the State of South Australia. He should not be serving 104 Greenhill Road, and he should not be serving a particular doctrine or ideology of corrections.

With those remarks, I support the Estimates Committee process. I think it was a good process. I only wish we had more of it. It is interesting to observe that confident Ministers, Ministers who are across their portfolio—such as the Treasurer and Attorney-General—come into Estimates with three or four public servants to advise them. Ministers like the Minister for Correctional Services and the Minister for Emergency Services filled not only all the available space between the Minister's table and the bar of the Legislative Council but also one of the galleries. When the Minister was answering questions, there would have been a minimum of 24 public servants sitting behind him.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ATKINSON: The Opposition is grateful to have the Minister for Correctional Services available during Question Time and Estimates, but he should know that I will not let Mr Paget's conduct rest.

Mr WRIGHT (Lee): I noted the comments made by the member for Hammond, which I support, that the reduction of the Estimates Committees from 13 days of Committee hearings to 10 was disappointing. I also noted the comments made by the member for Spence, which I support, but I go further than that and say that not only can we highlight those examples that were provided but we can go into even more detail by noting the way some of the Ministers performed in Estimates.

As to those who do not have the runs on the board and do not have the capabilities or confidence to be able to run their Committee, not only do they do what has been noted by the member for Spence, but also they go far further and bulk up their time with opening statements, obviously prepared for them—in some cases taking up to 15 minutes or more—and with questions asked by Government members. It is legitimate for the Government to ask questions, although it involves not only the style of questions that are asked but also the way in which some Ministers go about answering them, taking in some cases up to 10 minutes to answer dorothy dixers, completely wasting the time of the Estimates Committee.

These are very stark examples not only of the time being wasted in Estimates Committees but also of some of the duds that exist on the Government side. They were well and truly noted by the Opposition. It goes even further than that. In one situation, from 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. only was allocated for the portfolios of Recreation and Sport and Racing, a very significant portfolio cutting across two specific areas. We had just two and a half hours allocated to that but, if that was not bad enough, we had to stop for a 15 minute coffee break. This is just beyond the point of recall.

When I suggested to the Minister that perhaps we could just continue through and not worry about stopping for a coffee break, he had the audacity to say to me, 'You have agreed to all of this; this was pre-arranged. You have agreed to the program, so why should we not have our coffee break?' What a joke that was—as if we had any choice in agreeing to the program that was put before the House. These are further examples of time wasting which dilutes the value of the Estimates Committee. They are examples that the Government should not pursue, and they are all the poorer for it.

I would like to highlight a few examples in the areas for which I have responsibility as shadow Minister for Tourism, Recreation and Sport and Racing. We noted that, despite the issue being raised time and again for a considerable amount of time now, we are still no further down the track in getting information about what has occurred with respect to the sacking of Carole Hancock, despite the fulsome praise that has been proffered in this House on a number of occasions over a long period of time about the outstanding success of the *Secrets* book, of which Carole Hancock was the author.

We still have no public announcement by the Minister as to the detail of the sacking of Carole Hancock, although we did learn for the first time that Carole Hancock was paid out far in excess of the standards that have been set by the Public Sector Management Act. She was employed under the Tourism Act, to which she was fully entitled, but the Public Sector Management Act, which was introduced by Hon. Dean Brown when Premier, and put in place—and I quote from the Government—so that '... never again could we have the payouts that took place under Labor'. Well, let it be on the public record that Carole Hancock was paid out far in excess of the standards set by the Public Sector Management Act. We also learnt for the first time that there is now a court case pending with regard to her dismissal, and we await the outcome of that.

I just hope that finally, after three cracks at it, the Government has finally got it right in making sure that the Tourism Commission delivers the services that the tourism industry deserves. We are on the public record as acknowledging and congratulating Bill Spurr on his appointment, and we on this side of the House are very confident that he will prove to be a very successful leader of the Tourism Commission. For some time, well before Carole Hancock was appointed, we had been singing his praises, and we are delighted that the Government finally took notice of what we were saying about who should head the Tourism Commission and also took a bit of notice about what people in the tourism industry were saying.

The Opposition has also been very supportive of what has taken place in the tourism area. I have acknowledged on a number of occasions the money that has been put forward in this budget, especially in the area of infrastructure that relates to tourism, and we welcome that and acknowledge the money that has been put into those areas. We have also acknowledged, on a number of occasions, the outstanding production of the *Secrets* booklet. Notwithstanding that, we have raised some genuine questions because it has been noted, and we have been made aware, as a result of people in the tourism industry speaking up, that a number of areas were missed out in the first booklet that was produced. I can only hope that subsequent productions of which the Minister spoke today rectify that. We have also raised legitimate questions about how this fits into the general strategy, and whether in fact all or too many of our resources are being put into this one area.

We will therefore be looking at and measuring very carefully in the years to come the success of this production.

Also, we have raised concerns about some of the targeting that has occurred. There has been a lot of emphasis on interstate markets. That is very important, but we cannot forsake what is taking place within our own State. There has to be a balance to all these things and there must be priorities. We just say that the jury is still out on this. We acknowledge the quality of the production and hope that the work that is done brings home the success that is so important to the South Australian economy.

We also wonder about what has occurred with respect to pre-Olympics packaging. This is very quickly coming upon us. We have not heard a lot in this area. We have heard a little from the Minister for Recreation and Sport about certain teams that are coming to South Australia pre-Olympics as part of their training. That is obviously a very positive area which we welcome and for which we provide bipartisan support. We hope that is occurring in coordination with the sport so that the those involved know what is happening and so that some focused targeting is taking place. We are also interested to know what is happening in the area of tourism pre-Olympics: how that is being put together, how we can get involved and how we can attract people to South Australia as part of the opportunities that avail themselves to South Australia in the lead-up to the Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games, obviously, will be a fabulous event not only for Australia but worldwide. This event will be something about which all Australians can and should be proud and they need to get involved. I hope that all Australians take the opportunity, in whatever way they can afford and with whatever time they have available, to become involved in this great event which occurs once every four years and which was last held in Melbourne in 1956. I say to all Australians, and particularly to all South Australians, do not miss this opportunity to get involved. If people are able to do so they should go to Sydney and become involved in these games. It is an opportunity that some of us will never see again in this country.

To younger Australians, in terms of this huge event which provides so many opportunities in not only sporting areas but in cultural and historical perspectives, I say get involved; learn about it and learn about the culture of the Olympic Games. When the Olympic torch relay comes to South Australia get involved. Make sure that you learn about it and become a part of what will certainly be a great part of Australia's history.

I also draw to the attention of the House today a couple of other areas which we raised in respect of Olympic soccer. We still do not know what taxpayers are paying for Olympic soccer. We welcome the seven Olympic soccer matches that are coming to South Australia and I hope that they are a resounding success. We want the Hindmarsh stadium, which has a capacity for 15 000 people and which cost the taxpayers \$29 million, to be filled for every one of those seven matches. We note with concern some elements that have occurred in respect of that stadium. We dragged out of the Minister for Recreation and Sport a number of aspects that had not been put into the public domain. We discovered for the first time from the Minister for Tourism that responsibility for the stadium is no longer a part of her portfolio as it was last year: it is now the responsibility of the Minister for Recreation and Sport.

We discovered that another \$7 million is being paid by the taxpayers to bring Olympic soccer to South Australia but we

still have not been told by the Minister the bottom line that taxpayers of South Australia are paying for Olympic soccer. We know that approximately \$29 million has been expended on the Hindmarsh Stadium, which we will have forever, but the stadium was upgraded to attract Olympic soccer to South Australia. As did every other State, we bid for Olympic soccer and we have been given seven matches.

However, unlike any other State we did not use our own public servants to put together the information that was required by SOCOG. We employed a consultant, Mr Sam Ciccarello, and we understand that the bottom line for that consultant is \$378 000. For the life of me, I cannot understand why Major Events, which has been so successful in many other areas, was not used (and we were told that Major Events was used) solely to put together a package to win these matches. For some reason we had to pay \$378 000, and I hope that is the bottom line. I hope that the figure which is in the public domain is no higher. We had to pay a consultant. No other State in Australia needed to do that. All other States used their public servants and their Government departments. For some unknown reason, South Australia had to go off at a tangent and spend \$378 000 to win these seven matches. We were always going to get these matches and that is terrific. It is a great thing for South Australia and I hope that the stadium is filled for every one of those seven matches.

There are still some unanswered questions with regard to Olympic soccer. The taxpayers of South Australia have a right to know the bottom line. We are told by an incompetent Minister that this is not information that can go into the public domain. If we do not end up in a break even situation we do not know who will pay. Will it be SOCOG or will it be the taxpayers of South Australia? Who will pay if we are not able to fill that stadium? These are questions that must be answered. These are questions to which the public of South Australia have every right to expect an answer. All members of this Parliament welcome Olympic soccer coming to South Australia. We all want it to be successful but we deserve to know the answers to legitimate questions that have been raised in respect of the process that has occurred.

We also deserve to know, because it has been talked about for a long time, what is happening to Football Park. On a number of occasions, both pre and post election, the Leader of the Opposition has said that we will make money available for the upgrading of Football Park so that we can get more backsides on seats. We have also said that if taxpayers' money is to be made available to upgrade Football Park to install an additional 5 000 or 6 000 seats this money should be used for seats to accommodate the general public. We want those seats made available to every ordinary South Australian on a regular basis, and I note the arguments on both sides about how we can maximise the revenue.

Of course we must be cognisant of that but we must also be cognisant of giving the opportunity to ordinary people, when they make a decision on a given weekend that they want to see the Crows and Essendon, or the Power and the Kangaroos, or whichever teams might be playing, that some seating is available to them. At the moment many people are missing out. I also encountered a vacuum from the Minister for Recreation and Sport when I raised a number of legitimate questions about how the Office of Recreation and Sport is operating. Answer: blank. I also asked a question of the Minister about the review that is taking place in the Office of Recreation and Sport and whether the people in the recreation and sporting industry—because I received a memo that said

quite the opposite—would have the opportunity to comment on that review. Answer: blank.

I also asked the Minister about what was happening with regional grants and whether the full \$900 000 that had been allocated in this budget is being spent in this budget, because I understand that that is not the case. Answer: blank. I also asked the Minister about whether he could guarantee that, as a result of the change in structure that is taking place with Vacswim, parents would not pay any more in fees. Answer: blank. But it is when we ask questions about the racing industry that we really hit the blank button. Whatever you ask the Minister about racing you hit the blank button. The Minister simply says, 'Since I have been Minister I have been prepared to meet with anyone who has sought a meeting with me.' Well, good on you, Minister.

What about the Minister's getting across his brief. What about finding out what makes the racing industry tick. What about doing what he is paid to do: to give some service to those people in the racing industry who are trying to make the industry tick. In terms of the racing industry, this State has never had a racing industry Minister such as the present Minister.

When I asked him questions about the negative settlement fee, which is a \$4 million tax that South Australia is paying to Victoria for the right to be in SuperTAB, he had no idea what it was. He had no idea what the industry was on about in respect of this \$4 million that we are paying to TABCorp for the right to be in the SuperTAB. When we speak about venue rationalisation, we have another example. For three years the racing industry has awaited—and still awaits—the recommendation from the Minister about what will happen with regard to venue rationalisation. Minister, the time is up. Labor has announced its policy with regard to Gawler, and for us Gawler must stay, for many reasons.

They have identified how they can keep going without using industry money; that is, they can sell off some surplus land and that money can be used to improve their facilities and their track. If they are prepared to do that, they are now operating in the black, so we say to them, 'If you're not going to take money away from the racing industry, tick: Gawler continues.' And we will continue to work through that and await the Government's recommendation. In conclusion, I had the privilege to go down to the South-East last Friday at the invitation of Mr McEwen, and we had a terrific meeting about how we can take this racing industry forward. There was uniform support that RIDA must go; that RIDA has done nothing for the racing industry and it must go.

Ms BREUER (Giles): Last week I visited Oak Valley in the far west of South Australia, which is part of my electorate and about as far west as you can go. At the time the budget was brought down and press statements released, a line in a press statement said that work would continue at Oak Valley Aboriginal School. Page 8.34 of the Portfolio Statements under Works in Progress listed \$300 000 as the estimated result for 1998-99 with some further \$700 000 promised for the new year. I was very interested to go over there to see what work had actually progressed at the Oak Valley school. My trip was an eventful one. I went over the worst road that I have ever been on in my life—and I have been on a number of bad roads, particularly since my election to Parliament. I believe that the road was left in this condition recently by the Army, when they did some work at Oak Valley and, against all advice, actually travelled over the road between Yalata

and Ooldea, some 130 or 140 kilometres, and left the road in a terrible state with ruts everywhere.

Then, I believe, they came back to try to tidy up the road and left it in an even worse state, which now means that people travelling between Yalata and Ooldea have to travel over this horrendous road. A trip that should take something like an hour or hour and 10 minutes took 3½ hours in a four wheel drive. When I asked Dr Archie Barton for permission to go to the Oak Valley-Maralinga area he asked, 'Are you flying?' I said, 'No, I'm driving.' He made the comment, 'Good: you can see the road.' At the time I did not take a lot of notice, but now I understand exactly what he was talking about. When we look through this budget, a considerable amount of money has been allocated for Aboriginal health, Aboriginal education and improving the general wellbeing of Aboriginal communities. That road is a fundamental issue, where this Government has missed the point.

We are talking about improving the lot of Aboriginal communities, yet fundamental access to those communities is just not available. We have an appalling road with nothing being done about it. Some road work is in progress at the moment, but it will take a lot of money and work to improve that road, which is the link between those communities. It is essential. So, I arrived at Oak Valley to see the new work going on. It is a good little community, a growing community. While I was there I had the pleasure of visiting the five campuses of the Oak Valley Aboriginal School. This was quite an experience. Five campuses: this is a big school. Oak Valley Aboriginal School has a population of between 20 and 50 students at any one time, depending on what is happening in the area, so I visited the first campus.

It was the office space that the teachers use for administration. It was a small Atco hut, part of CDEP. The second campus I visited was the Child Parent Centre. This is a small Atco hut with one toilet outside and an air-conditioner that does not work in summer, or works on a very limited basis. I then visited the third campus: two caravans, some 2½ kilometres away, joined by a boardwalk, where the primary school students are based. I visited the fourth campus, a small Atco hut that has been left there by another Government department in the past. It is about one kilometre away from the two caravans, with no toilet. Then I saw the fifth campus of the Oak Valley Aboriginal School, which is a teacher's residence. Incidentally, at times there are two other campuses, because two other teachers also use their homes in hot weather to take their students.

So, there are a number of issues about this school. The first is the office space. It is the main part of the school and the greeting point for parents. We are talking about improving education for Aboriginal students in this State and talking about making schools a friendly place for parents and teachers to come, to improve the rates of attendance at Aboriginal schools, yet we have this grotty little office tucked away in someone else's building for people to come to for their first greeting at the school. Staff need to be able to feel welcome and need to feel comfortable out of school hours. They need a place to work, to communicate with other communities and with families back home: none of this was available.

It is very small. There are no library resources, no privacy or confidentiality and only one phone in the room. They have had to use the CDEP fax machine, and it is very difficult, if they are in conversation with parents or family members of their own, to have any sort of privacy. There is very limited working space, yet three people and the school council come

to work from there. There is nowhere to store confidential information about students or staff. Toilet access is some distance away, and there is no running water in the building.

I believe that a small hut has now been sent up there, and I would be very interested to see where they have located this, because the place they were in, the CDEP building, they had to leave at the end of the week. On the way back from Oak Valley we passed a truck that was crawling along at 10 kilometres per hour for this 130 to 140 kilometres to take this Atco hut to the school. That is indicative of the state the road was in. The hut was arriving, so at least they had their own place, they did not have to share facilities. But I would be interested to see where the hut is located.

The secondary teaching space, which was the small Atco hut some 2½ kilometres from the primary school children, did not belong to the Department of Education but was actually a hut that belonged to the Health Department and was just left there. Because there were problems with the primary school children working with the secondary school children, it was decided by one of the teachers to take the secondary school students there, particularly the secondary school boys, because it is very much easier and more appropriate with Aboriginal students when they get to secondary level to separate the boys from the girls. So, the male teacher has taken the boys to this building.

There is no electricity inside, so there is no lighting. But that does not matter, because there are no windows either. There is no heating or cooling, but that does not really matter. The problem is that it is hot in summer and cold in winter and not the other way round. There are no telecommunications, no telephone, no access to other people. They do not have a phone system but a walkie-talkie system, which does not work very often, particularly around this building. The range apparently is not good; the hut is too far away. Steps to the building were put in by the teachers. There are three or four sleepers stacked up so that the students can get inside the building. There is a toilet, but where it is I am not sure, so mostly it is not used. There is no water, no security for the classroom and only one exit point. So, if someone was to set light to the building, there is only one exit point through which these students could escape. Occupational health and safety is just not a consideration in this building. It is absolutely ridiculous.

Teachers using their residences as an education space because they are hoping to get a new school is only a short-term solution, and teachers using their own telephone and fax lines raises confidentiality issues, particularly when other families members are present. This practice means moving resources backwards and forwards to the teacher's house, and that is an occupational health and safety risk once again, particularly so for the teacher taking students to their places. They have discussed this with the Education Department. However, there is no alternative at this stage; this is what they have to do.

Another issue is the school car. This has been a very difficult problem for them, but it has been resolved to some extent, because they now have two vehicles. However, they often find that they have to pick up the students to get them to school. If your school campus is 2½ kilometres out of town, you have to pick up the students and take them to school, particularly in summertime. So, the school car has been an issue in the past. They have now solved that to some extent, but some problems are still associated with it; for example, if one of the cars is taken out of the community for teachers to attend meetings perhaps at Yalata, no vehicle is

available on the day. Also, if a teacher needs to pick up visitors from airstrips or whatever, that means the teacher is taken out of the classroom and, if it is after hours, the vehicle is not available to get these students home from their classrooms.

One of the issues that recently arose was that of attendance at schools, particularly Aboriginal schools. Some statistics showed that Aboriginal schools have a lower attendance than any other school in the State. When one looks at a place like Oak Valley, you ask yourself, 'Is it any wonder?' They have substandard facilities and teachers who have to come out of the classroom when they have meetings. If the teachers, by chance, happened to get a bit of training and development somewhere, they would be out of the school for two or three days, so the school would close. We cannot attract students to school and make a place friendly when there are dreadful facilities. So, students are missing out on school.

The child-parent centre is a small space and can have up to 26 children at any one time. In summertime the air-conditioner packs up so it is hot, humid and horrible. There is one little toilet out the back, and it is the old long drop system, of which the children are terrified. We are talking about three, four or five year olds who will not use the toilet, because they are terrified of these long drops. Consequently, the school yard is used. In that area it is impossible for teachers to provide a good learning environment for students and to provide a good education for them.

These issues, of which the department is extremely aware, have been going on for years in Oak Valley. Every now and then somebody comes and discusses these issues with them, then they disappear again and nothing is done about it. For years principals from Yalata have been saying that Oak Valley will soon have a new school, so I met with the staff and Mr Hughie Windlass, a delightful gentleman who has been associated with the school for many years and is the Chair of the school council. I asked him, 'Where is this work continuing?', in reply to which he said, 'Well, that's my problem. We got the press release saying work was continuing at our school; \$300 000 worth of work has supposedly been done. Where is this work?' I suggested to him that perhaps the work was the telephone calls between the bureaucrats, Mr Windlass and the Principal of the school—it was a very expensive bill, containing \$300 000 worth of telephone calls!

While I was there, I was told that they have been visited recently by senior departmental staff after the teachers threatened to go on strike and close the school because nothing was being done. John Halsey, the Director of Country Schools, had been there recently and also was coming there a week after I left. He turned up with a model for a new school for that area. Within 20 minutes of my arriving back in Ceduna that week after visiting Oak Valley (I had been away for some four or five days out of range), I was very interested to receive a call from a senior executive in the Education Department, saying, 'I believe you've been to Oak Valley' and then telling me of the work that was progressing with the Oak Valley school. I was pleased to hear this, because it sounded as though things were happening and as that the school will go there.

However, I am also somewhat cynical about this, because this time last year I spoke about the Wataru school in the Pitjantjatjara lands which I visited, a school that was filled with asbestos, holes in the roof through which rain came, and so on. The Minister promised me that Wataru would get a school quickly. Initially, he said that would happen in seven

weeks. That was a bit unrealistic. This was over a year ago and, some two or three weeks ago, the school arrived in Wataru. So it took over a year for the school to arrive, despite pressure by the Minister, despite promises that the school would get this, and despite the occupational health and safety risks in the Wataru school. So I now have similar fears about the Oak Valley school. We have money allocated in the budget and we have promises from senior staff in the Education Department saying that it will happen. But will it? I will be asking questions every parliamentary session from now on about progress in the Oak Valley school and also about progress in other Aboriginal schools in my region.

Last week I was insulted by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs because I dared to ask a question about the parliamentary Aboriginal Lands Trust committee. My motives in asking these questions were questioned, and I was greatly insulted by the Minister's comments. I am prepared to go out and talk to our Anangu people. When I visit my areas, I drive in; I do not fly in and out as Ministers do and many members of Parliament have done in the past. I have visited schools in the northern and far western parts of my State, and I have seen the state of these schools. The facilities are appalling. Occupational health and safety is just not considered in these schools. Conditions in school yards are appalling; they are dangerous to the children and to the staff. You cannot blame the locals and vandalism for these conditions; they are substandard and appalling.

No white middle-class family would allow their children near these schools. They just would not let it happen. I remember spending hours at a school council of which I was a member arguing whether we should put bark chips or apple pips under a swing. It took some three meetings to decide that, because there was an occupational health and safety risk involving the children falling off the swing and landing in the sand. That pales by comparison when I see the conditions to which these students are subjected in these Aboriginal schools.

As I said before, during every session of Parliament, I will be asking the Minister for Education what progress is being made at the Oak Valley School and in these other Aboriginal schools. I will continue to ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs about the Aboriginal Lands Trust committee and what is happening with it. The Minister said that it was patronising for us to have this committee, that it was out of date and that it was not wanted by the Aboriginal community. I will not accept that explanation. I want to know whom she is consulting and whether, indeed, she is consulting Aboriginal communities when she makes these statements. She cannot make decisions about parliamentary committees. Let the committee meet and decide what its future will be. It is not up to the Minister when this committee has been set up by law and, as yet, that law has not been changed.

Aboriginal people have been neglected by this Government and the Federal Government in the past two years, and they really have had very little opportunity to consult with people, to have a say in their lives and to actually move ahead. I will continue to visit my electorate, to ask questions and to monitor progress on these issues where money has been allocated in this budget. I will not be intimidated by threats, insults or anything else. We have a job to do out there and, as member for Giles, it is my job to make sure that it happens in these communities.

Ms STEVENS (Elizabeth): Before making some specific remarks about my portfolio areas of health, disability

services, FACS and ageing, I will make some general comments about the Estimates process itself. In terms of being an open, transparent process that is designed to get questions answered in good faith, the process absolutely needs looking at again.

It seems to me, particularly with the new format of our budget papers for the second year in a row, that it is impossible to find out what is going on. One has to cynically accept the fact that the process is more about the Opposition's trying to get answers and the Government's trying not to give them. We need to look seriously at what we spend and how we spend that two weeks of our time and what real value it is in terms of good government. That being said, I would like to turn to a number of matters that relate to my own portfolio areas.

It was quite an astounding revelation on budget day when the Minister for Human Services told us there was going to be a \$46 million cut to the budget and that it was going to impact severely, particularly in the health area. That is not a surprise because the health area is such a massive part of the human services budget and a significant part of the total State budget. In his original press release he told us we were going to have 14 000 fewer elective surgery operations performed this year. However, he did not tell us anywhere near the extent of the damage that will be inflicted on the South Australian community this year, and that is the sort of information that came out of the Estimates. I am going to put that clearly on the record for people so that they understand the extent of what we are going to be looking at this year.

It will result in 14 000 fewer elective surgery operations, according to the Minister for Human Services, and it will result in waiting lists blowing out up to about 25 000. Present waiting lists are in the 8 000s, so we are looking at a tripling of the waiting list numbers for our metropolitan hospitals. We will have 102 800 fewer outpatient appointments this year in our metropolitan hospitals and 34 400 fewer home visits, including things like domiciliary care, the Hospital in the Home and outreach services that hospitals perform in the community. There will be 5 200 fewer outpatient appointments in country hospitals. Most surprising of all, we will see 28 800 fewer services in the accident and emergency sections of metropolitan hospitals. We will see 500 jobs lost in delivering these cuts and meeting the budget targets.

It is interesting that those damning figures virtually got no run at all in the Adelaide print media, but they are the facts. Interestingly, the next day I looked at the *Advertiser* and noticed that 500 jobs would be lost was in the last sentence of a page of fluff pieces for the Minister. The last sentence mentioned a job loss of up to 500 people. The *Advertiser* editorial made a rather strange comment, but still it made a comment, about the severity of those job losses and the fact that they were going to be coming from doctors and nurses. The editorial questioned the wisdom of such cuts. So far as ordinary members of the public reading the *Advertiser* that morning, they would have no indication of the severity of those job losses. I think back to other headlines in the *Advertiser* about job losses and certainly anything of the magnitude of 500 job losses in my memory usually has had a fair bit of prominence. Well, that was not the case last week and I have to ask why that was so.

So, when I attempted to question the Minister about how these massive cuts would be delivered, he did not have a lot to say about how they were going to be put into practice. Essentially, his answer was, 'It is going to be up to the hospitals.' The hospitals will get budgets that are going to

mean that they are going to have to restrict services considerably and they are going to be left to get on with the job. It is going to be interesting to see how they cope. It will be interesting to visit an accident and casualty department just to see how they are managing to turn people away.

The Minister mentioned a number of people who turn up at casualty departments when they ought to be going to a GP. That may well be so, but how will A&E departments spend time ensuring that they are dealing with the appropriate people and then face the fact that they will have to turn others away? What about the work and stress load on an already overburdened staff in those casualty departments? It will increase considerably, but the Minister had nothing to offer. Essentially, he said, 'Well, that's it.' You have to ask, as the Opposition did, why did human services do so badly. Again, I reiterate: human services took a massive cut, having had considerable cuts over previous years.

The Opposition posed to the Minister the issue of the signing up last year by the Premier of the current Medicare agreement. We know that our current Minister, Hon. Dean Brown, strongly spoke up in relation to the Commonwealth Medicare agreement. He put up a big fight and led the fight that Health Ministers put up to the Commonwealth Government about health funding. Dean Brown and other State and Territory Health Ministers on 20 May last year issued a joint media release expressing their concern that falling private health insurance fund membership had cost the States \$689 million over the life of the last Medicare agreement.

Our share of that is about \$50 million. It was that amount of money at the very least that we required to be able to make up. Our Premier settled on \$17.4 million each year when, in fact, we needed \$50 million. He really did us in the ear at the Federal level and the facts are that the Premier caved in to the Prime Minister and the people of South Australia will now pay the price. But the Premier will also pay the price because, when this starts to impact, we will be highlighting every day the people who are turned away or who wait for hours longer in A&E departments, the people who cannot get operations, the people who can no longer stay and live in their homes because home visiting services are cut out. We will be shouting that loud and hard at every opportunity.

Briefly, I want to mention some other areas, for example, issues in relation to disability services. This matter has been mentioned by me and others on a number of occasions but, again, I ask the question of the Minister about this State Government's commitment to the massive unmet need that exists in our community for people with a disability and for the carers of people with a disability.

The Minister essentially said that it was a State and Commonwealth matter, that even though he was critical of the Commonwealth Government for not putting up a bid as to how it would meet its obligations the State Government was not prepared to do anything at all until the Commonwealth Government coughed up. In other words, we stand back and have a stand-off, with both sides pointing at each other. Meanwhile, the desperation and suffering of those thousands of people continue. It is a very weak position. It is a position that shows no strength, no commitment and no leadership.

Another issue that I would like to raise is child abuse, which is something that every member of this House ought to pay close attention to. What the Minister for Human Services admitted during Estimates was that not only are hundreds of children being re-abused after their first contact

with Family and Youth Services investigating officers but also that the department itself does not have the staff in many cases to follow up on child abuse reports. That is an appalling situation in this day and age. I was told on very good authority that more than half of the incidents of child abuse reported to the Gawler branch of Family and Youth Services have not been followed up because there are not enough people to investigate those reports or to follow through with the services needed to deal with them.

At Elizabeth and Noarlunga, up to 20 per cent of all the incidents of child abuse notifications are not followed up because of a lack of resources. It is so common that the service has even developed a code that is put next to those incidents. It is called RPI: resources prevent investigation. So much a part of usual practice has this become that we even have a code to put next to it. That is a disgrace. It is completely unacceptable. The amazing thing is that, in answering my question, the Minister said that there was nothing more important than keeping our children safe, but as for talking specifically about how he would deal with this situation and what action he would take to change this disgraceful situation, he was silent.

I tell the House that I am not prepared to let this rest. I understand that a huge witch-hunt is now occurring within the Department of Human Services to find the culprit who told me this information, so rather than spend energy trying to track down how I found out that this was occurring, perhaps the Department of Human Services and the Minister might lend their efforts to addressing the situation that exists.

Finally, I would like to make a brief reference to dental care. It must be quite clear to everybody today, if they were not clear last week, that we have a massive crisis on our hands in term of dental care in this State. It is another issue for which the Minister for Human Services refuses to take responsibility. It is very interesting because, on any issue, the Minister for Human Services is the Minister who attracts no blame. He is the Minister who points his finger at everybody else. If it is not the Federal Government, it is local government or it is the ageing population or, last week when he was commenting on the 97 000 people on the waiting list, he blamed the number of people on the waiting list and said that we would have to change the criteria so that fewer people are

on the list. The Minister makes no attempt to take any responsibility to do something about the existing situation.

The revelations that my colleague the member for Peake made today are appalling. It is the sort of thing that we have been hearing for a year or more, that dental care is being sacrificed and that, rather than doing the best for patients, intrusive procedures have to be used because they are cheaper and more available. They are the rumours we have been hearing. The member for Peake has been able to get the proof that that is the case. Again, the Minister slips and slides and says, 'I am having a review,' but that is what he said last year when we raised this issue. Last year when he said that, the waiting list was 80 000. When he said that he was having a review, he also said that he was appalled, cross, very indignant, very concerned and very upset. I understand that the results of that review are still sitting on his desk. Meanwhile the waiting lists have grown to 97 000. So much for action. The Minister for Human Services needs to get his mind on his job and, if he cannot do it, the Premier should put somebody in there who can.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services): I move:

That the remainder of the Bill be agreed to.

Motion carried.

Bill read a third time and passed.

AUSTRALASIA RAILWAY (THIRD PARTY ACCESS) BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

CITY OF ADELAIDE (RUNDLE MALL) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.44 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday 7 July at 2 p.m.